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India posts record-breaking total, SA fights back

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WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS!!!

Sky's the limit as India lift T20 World Cup after 17 yrs

BRIDGETOWN, 29 JUNE

On an emotion-filled day, India ended their 11-year wait for a global trophy, overcoming South Africa, who chocked at the business end of the match by seven runs to emerge champions in the T20 World Cup here.

It was India's second T20 World Cup victory after they had won it in 2007 under the legendary MS Dhoni in South Africa, and first since winning the Champions Trophy in 2013. Virat Kohli, who was an upcoming cricketer 17 years ago, made his first fifty of this tournament in the final- a classy 76 off 59 balls with six fours and two sixes that carried India to a competitive 176 for seven.

Then the Indian bowlers, led by Arshdeep Singh (2/20) and Jasprit Bumrah (2/18), worked their magic as they did throughout this tournament, limiting South Africa to 169 for eight to propel India to their second T20 World Cup.

There were pockets of fight from the Proteas, who were playing in their maiden World Cup final. Heinrich Klaasen threatened India with a 52 off 27 balls (2x4, 5x6) but Hardik Pandya (3/20) snatched the crucial wicket to bring the game decisively in favour of India.

But a large chunk of the credit should go to Kohli for anchoring the innings and pushing India to a fighting total. He completed his fifty in 48 balls, but the knock was what precisely India needed the early dismissals of skipper Rohit Sharma (9), Rishabh Pant (0) and Suryakumar Yadav (3), which had reduced India to a worrying 34 for three.

However, Kohli had an able partner in Axar Patel (47, 31 balls, 1x4, 6x4) during the fourth wicket alliance that produced precious 72 runs to ease the early nerves.

After the run-out of Axar, who took on SA bowlers bravely, another left-hander Shivam Dube (27 off 16 balls, 3x4 1x6) gave some late steam to Indian innings. —*PTI*

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Indian players celebrate after taking the wicket of South African batsman Reeza Hendricks **PHOTO: @BCCI**

Rohit Sharma
Indian captain Rohit Sharma celebrates after winning the world cup 13 years

IN ONLINE MODE

NTA to hold NET exam from 21 Aug to 4 Sept

UGC-NET was cancelled a day after being conducted on 18 June **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 28 JUNE

Amid a raging row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of competitive exams, the National Testing Agency (NTA) Friday night released fresh dates for cancelled and postponed examinations, announcing the UGC-NET will now be held from 21 August -4 September.

University Grants Commission–National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) was cancelled a day after being conducted on 18 June as the education ministry received inputs that the integrity of the exam was compromised.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had said the question paper was leaked on the darknet and circulated on the Telegram app. The matter is being probed by CBI. UGC-NET is a test to determine the eligibility for the award of Junior Research Fellowship, for appointment of assistant professors and admission to PhD courses.

In a shift from the earlier pattern, the exam was conducted in offline mode this year and on a single day. However, the rescheduled exam will be conducted according to the earlier pattern of Computer Based Test spread across a fortnight.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research UGC-NET, which was postponed as a pre-emptive measure amid the row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of exams, will now be held from 25 July -27 July. NCET for admission to the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which was postponed hours before its scheduled commencement on 12 June, will now be conducted on 10 July. —*PTI*

CBI arrests scribe in NEET paper leak

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches at seven locations in Gujarat on Saturday in connection with the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG exam and arrested a journalist in Jharkhand, officials said. Jamaluddin Ansari, a journalist, was arrested on Friday for trying to help the principal and vice principal of a Hazaribagh school.

>>>More on Page 3

5 jawans swept away while crossing river near LAC

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Five soldiers, including a junior commissioned officer (JCO), were killed during an exercise early Saturday as their Russian-origin T-72 tank was swept away following flash floods in the Shyok River near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, officials said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he was deeply saddened by the unfortunate accident that occurred in the river near Saser Brangsa.

Two T-72 tanks were trying to cross Shyok around 1am and one of them got stuck in high currents in the river, the officials said, adding the melting of snow resulted in the increase in the water levels.

Army deployed rescue teams but the mission didn't succeed **PHOTO: X/@RAHULSINGHX**

Army deployed rescue teams but the mission didn't succeed in view of the raging waters in the river. The deceased personnel are MRK Reddy, Subhan Khan, Bhupendra Negi, E Teibam and Sadarbonia Nagaraju. Indian Army troops deployed in the areas have been on a very high alert following the Galwan Valley clashes in June, 2020. The Army has deployed a sizable number of tanks in eastern Ladakh in view of the lingering border row.

India has been maintaining that its ties with China cannot be normal unless there is peace in the border areas.

Though there was no indication of a breakthrough at the 21st round of talks, both sides agreed to maintain "peace and tranquillity" on the ground and continue the communication on the way ahead. —*PTI*

GOVT HIKES NDRF RISK ALLOWANCE BY 40%: SHAH

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Union government has approved a 40 per cent hardship and risk allowance for NDRF rescuers, keeping in mind the tough operations undertaken by them, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Saturday.

He said this while welcoming a 35-member expedition team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) that recently scaled the 21,625-foot-high Mt Manirang in Himachal Pradesh.

"The government has approved a 40 per cent risk and hardship allowance for NDRF personnel only yesterday. This has been a long pending demand... All the 16,000 personnel of the force will benefit from this," Shah said after welcoming the expedition named 'Vijay'.

Officials said this allowance would be granted over and above salaries. Special forces like the National Security Guard and the Special Protection Group get a 25 per cent hardship allowance owing to the special charter of their duties. Shah said the government has also decided to make sports a "culture" for the various Central Armed Police Forces and special organisations like the NDRF. It has been decided that at least one team from these forces will mandatorily participate in international and national tournaments, he added. NDRF was raised in 2006 as a federal contingency and disaster response force. —*PTI*

Canopy collapses at Rajkot airport

RAJKOT, 29 JUNE

A portion of a fabric canopy erected at the pick-up and drop area of the Rajkot International Airport collapsed on Saturday after heavy rains, officials said. Nobody was injured in the incident, they said.

The accident, which comes days after similar incidents in Delhi and Jabalpur, gave the opposition Congress an opportunity to target the ruling BJP.

In a post on X, the Rajkot airport authorities said that water accumulation was observed on the city side of the canopy at the terminal building at 11.40am due to heavy rains.

"As we came to know about it we gave the information to the civil works department and the area beneath was cordoned off," said Rajkot International Airport in the post. The international airport is located at Hirasar, about 30km from Rajkot city.

"Around 11.55am, more water accumulated on the canopy amid heavy rains, due to which the canopy fabric got torn and fell. No casualties were reported in the incident. The airport civil team is removing the (damaged) canopy," they added.

The opposition Congress criticised the Narendra Modi government over the Rajkot canopy incident.

The prime minister inaugurated the new airport 11 months ago and its canopy has collapsed, said Gujarat Congress president Shaktisinh Gohil. "If in 11 months, the canopy collapses then it proves that corruption is at its peak and is being carried out without any fear. At that time (of accident), no one was underneath the canopy. Had someone died, then who would be responsible," he asked.

"I urge BJP and Prime Minister to take cognisance of such matters when he is speaking about a corruption-free administration," Gohil said. —*PTI*

ED ATTACHES LAND, BANK DEPOSITS OF CPI(M) IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

NEW DELHI/KOCHI, 29 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate alleged Saturday that the CPI(M) in Kerala was holding proceeds of money laundering, as it attached a land parcel and bank deposits worth Rs 73 lakh of the political party in a probe linked to the Karuvannur Service Cooperative Bank "scam".

Assets worth Rs 28.65 crore of various individuals and entities linked to the case have also been attached by the federal agency after a provisional order under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act was issued. Sources said the party may be named as an accused in the next supplementary chargesheet to be filed in this case. If so, it will be the second party to named accused in a money laundering investigation —*PTI*

2 children die after drowning in Udupi lake

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Two children of a family died after drowning in Nandrolli Lake in this district on Saturday. The parents, who tried to save them, are undergoing treatment in hospital, police said. The victims are Dhanraj Satish, 13, and Chhaya Satish, 7, who were studying in a school in Vandse, they said. According to the police, their parents, Sheela and Satish Madiwala, who tried to rescue them and barely survived from drowning, are in critical condition in a local hospital. Both children accidentally slipped and fell into the lake. The parents got into the water to rescue their children but in vain, a police official said. Local officials of the agriculture department also rushed to the spot but could not do much. —*PTI*

20 flights cancelled amid Delhi airport T1 shutdown

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

More than 20 flights of IndiGo and 2 flights of SpiceJet that were to operate from Terminal 1 of the Delhi airport were cancelled on Saturday, a day after the terminal was shut down following the roof collapse incident. There was no immediate comment from IndiGo. However, a SpiceJet source said it has shifted all T1 operations to T3 and all flights were operated on Saturday. Following the roof collapse incident, the operations at T1 were suspended on Friday. The flights that were to be operated from the terminal have been shifted to Terminal 2 (T2) and Terminal 3 (T3). On Friday, Delhi airport operator DIAL said it has set up a technical committee to probe the roof collapse at the airport's Terminal 1. —*PTI*

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2 boys drown in waterlogged Delhi underpass

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Two boys drowned in the waterlogged section at an underpass in outer north Delhi's SP Badali area on Saturday afternoon, a day after the city was lashed with heavy rains. The incident occurred near the Siraspur underpass near the metro, which was flooded with 2.5-3 feet of water, a senior police officer said. The police received a call about the boys drowning around 2.25pm, and a team was immediately rushed to the spot. They conducted a search operation, and with the help of a fire brigade, they recovered the bodies, the officer said. —*PTI*

Bengaluru reports first dengue death this year

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

Bengaluru on Saturday reported its first confirmed case of a death due to dengue since January amid a recent spike in cases, a senior official said.

The 27-year-old victim who died due to the vector-borne disease hailed from CV Raman Nagar. "He was admitted at Manipal Hospital on 25 June with a history of fever and died on 27 June due to severe dengue with multiple organ dysfunction syndrome," Dr Syed Sirajuddin Madni, Chief Health Officer, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike told PTI.

On Friday, two suspected deaths due to dengue were reported in Bengaluru following which the civic body decided to carry out a death audit today to ascertain the cause of death. The other patient, a 80-year-old woman, who was a native of Tamil Nadu also had breast and colon cancer and had shown symptoms of dengue. However, her cause of death was not dengue, the official said. With dengue cases being reported in the State, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday directed officials to take the detection and treatment of the viral infection seriously. From January till date, Bengaluru has reported 1,743 cases of dengue. According to the Chief Minister's office, a total of 5,374 cases and five deaths were reported in the State till 24 June. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

WRITES TO YOGI

Union Minister alleges bias against OBC

LUCKNOW, 29 JUNE

Union minister and Apna Dal (Sonelal) President Anupriya Patel has written a letter to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the rejection of OBC and SC/ST candidates for state government posts by declaring them "not found suitable".

In her letter dated 27 June, Patel said that she has been "constantly" contacted by candidates from the backward classes and scheduled caste/scheduled tribe category over the issue.

"In various competitive examinations conducted by the state government, which have only an interview-based recruitment process, the candidates of these classes are often declared 'not found suitable' for the posts reserved for them and none of them are selected," she said.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath and Union Minister Anupriya Patel **PHOTO: PTI**

She alleged that this process is "adopted many times for these posts in competitive examinations" and later the posts reserved for other OBC and SC/ST candidates are "declared unreserved."

However, an official of Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission refuted Patel's allegations and said that in case of no recruitment on reserved posts for OBCs, those posts are "carried forward" i.e. these posts are returned to the department.

> **In various competitive examinations conducted by the state government, the candidates of these classes are declared 'not found suitable' for the posts reserved for them**
>
> -Anupriya Patel, Union Minister

He said that there is a provision in the rules that if eligible candidates are not found for the posts reserved for OBCs, then those posts should be returned to the concerned department.

Patel's allegation that if there is no recruitment on reserved posts for OBCs, they are put in the unreserved category is not correct, he said.

Union minister requested the chief minister to take effective action to immediately stop this practice to "prevent the resentment arising among the candidates from these categories".

She also requested that by making necessary provisions, it should be made mandatory to fill the reserved posts only with the candidates from the OBC and SC/ST categories "no matter how many times the recruitment process has to be done for this". —*PTI*

Belagavi man held for duping people over medical seats

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

The police have arrested a 47-year-old man in Mumbai for allegedly cheating many people with the promise of facilitating admissions in medical colleges, a police official said on Saturday. Organda Arvind Kumar, originally from Belagavi was taken into custody from his career counselling centre in Mumbai city's Sakinaka area after a case registered against him last year in the neighbouring state. It is learnt that Kumar had taken money from the complainant to ensure a medical seat but failed to get the work done."This is not related to the NEET paper leak case. Kumar has opened a counselling centre along with his team in Sakinaka, where Karnataka police conducted a raid and arrested him," the official said. It is suspected that he has duped more people.Admissions in medical colleges have come under the spotlight amid the CBI probe into the NEET-UG paper leak case. The federal agency has made arrests in multiple states in connection with its investigation. —*PTI*

Ambulance, bike head-on collision claims 3 lives

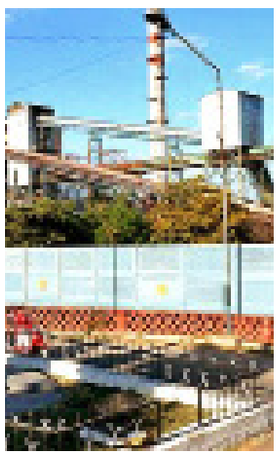
SHIVAMOGGA, 29 JUNE

Three bike riders were killed in a head on collision between an ambulance and a bike near Taralaghatta in Shikaripura taluk of Shivamogga on Friday night. The ambulance was on its way from Shivamogga towards Haveri while the bike was heading towards Hosajoga from Shikaripura. The deceased were Prasanna, 25, Karthik, 27, and Ajay, 25, all residents of Hosajoga. The accident took place when the family hailing from Bhadravathi was returning from a temple. The incident took place on the National Highway 48 in Bydagi.—***Salar News***

Five buses gutted in fire at City's nursing college

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

Five buses were destroyed in a fire that broke out at KTG School of Nursing near Hegganahalli Cross in Bengaluru on Saturday. The incident, which occurred around 2 pm, was reportedly accidental, and no injuries or fatalities were reported. Firefighters battled the blaze for nearly an hour to prevent it from spreading to nearby buildings. The buses were parked in an open area on the college property, but unfortunately, the flames quickly spread from one vehicle to another, ultimately consuming all five. The cause of the fire is currently under investigation. —***Salar News***



MLC urges CM to waive power bills of Mysore Sugar Co

MANDYA, 29 JUNE

MLC Dinesh Gooligowda has petitioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to waive the electricity bill of Mysore Sugar Co Ltd after Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation warned of cutting the power supply over unpaid bills. Established in 1932, the factory is considered the lifeline of the farmers in Mandya district and it is the State's only government-owned sugar factory. The factory has unpaid electricity bills totalling Rs 52.25 crore over the past 25 years. The MLC said if the government didn't waive the dues, it would jeopardise the upcoming sugarcane crushing season on which the farmers are dependent. —***Salar News***

Lingayat seer seeks community CM, DCM

Vokkaliga seer had pitched similar demand

KALABURAGI, 29 JUNE

Another prominent Veerashaiva-Lingayat seer on Saturday pitched for a leader from the community to be considered for the Chief Minister's post in case there is a leadership change or in the event of creation of additional Deputy Chief Minister posts in Karnataka.

Balehonnur Rambhapuri seer Veera Someshwara Shivacharya Swamy said this a day after Srisaila Jagadguru Channa Siddharama Panditaradhya Swamiji made a similar demand.

Also pitching for Veershaiva-Lingayat ministers to be considered in case additional deputy chief minister posts are created, Srisaila Jagadguru Channa Siddharama Panditaradhya Swamiji pointed out that the community votes were decisive for Congress to form government in the State.

The demand from Veershaiva-Lingayat seers came after Vokkaliga seer -- Kumar Chandrashekaranatha Swamiji of Vishwa Vokkaliga Mahasamastana Math, on

CM Siddaramaiah ***PHOTO: PTI***

Thursday raised the pitch for Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar as CM. CM Siddaramaiah was present on the dais at the event. Warning his party men against making public statements on CM and DCM issue in the interest of the party, Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress President earlier had requested seers not to interfere in political matters.

"In case there is a situation to change (CM), in the election the dominant Veerashaiva-Lingayat community has supported Congress. Those heading the government should not see Veerashaiva-Lingayat's contribution to Congress with neglect," Veera Someshwara Shivacharya Swamiji said.

—PTI

DON'T COMMENT ON LEADERSHIP: DKS TO CONG WORKERS

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

KPCC President DK Shivakumar on Saturday warned that notices will be issued and disciplinary action will be taken against party members publicly speaking about change of Chief Minister and Deputy CM in State.

"Discipline is paramount for the party. We have worked hard to bring the party to power. AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, (Chief Minister) Siddaramaiah and I held a meeting and decided that everyone has to work for the party. Ministers, MLAs and seers should not speak about party matters," he said . Shivakumar said there were no discussions with the High Command regarding the change of Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister.

—*Salar News*

Valmiki scam: BJP to lay siege to CM's house on 3 July

SHIVAMOGGA, 29 JUNE

Karnataka BJP leaders will lay siege to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's residence in Bengaluru on 3 July, demanding his resignation in connection with an alleged illegal money transfer scam involving a state-run corporation, party's state president BY Vijayendra said on Saturday.

BJP on Friday held a Statewide protest against Congress government on the issue and held demonstrations in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office in almost all districts.

The illegal money transfer issue, involving the corporation, came to light after its accounts superintendent, Chandrashekhar P, died by suicide on 26 May, leaving behind a death note.

The note claimed unauthorised transfer of Rs 187 crore belonging to the corporation from its bank account, and from that, Rs 88.62 crore was illegally moved to various accounts allegedly belonging to "well-known" IT companies and a Hyderabad-based cooperative bank, among others.

Following allegations against Minister B Nagendra tendered his resignation on 6 June. State government has constituted an SIT headed by Manish Kharbika and team to conduct the probe. —*PTI*

HC restores wildlife body's registration

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Karnataka High Court has annulled orders issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) that led to the cancellation of registration of Centre for Wildlife Studies' (CWS) under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

Founded by scientist K Ullas Karanth, Bengaluru-based CWS faced "suspension" of registration under the FCRA on 5 March, 2021.

This suspension was extended and later turned into cancellation of registration on 4 September, 2023, following a show-cause notice issued by MHA on 3 December, 2021.

CWS contested the cancellation, arguing that it lacked justification and that Karanth, son of Jnanpith laureate late K Shivaram Karanth, was not granted a personal hearing as mandated under Section 14(2) of the FCRA.

The MHA countered it, contending that personal hearings were not required before cancelling a registration.

Justice M Nagaprasanna of Karnataka High Court noted that while Section 14(2) allows for the cancellation of registration, Section 14(3) prevents the entity from re-registering for three years.

"The words depicted in the Act 'reasonable opportunity of being heard' cannot be restricted to issuance of a show cause notice but a personal hearing in the peculiar facts of the case owing to the peculiarity of sub-section (3) of Section 14 of the Act must have been afforded to the petitioner," the judge said in a recent order.

The court observed that non-affording of personal hearing to the petitioner has rendered the order unsustainable and the unsustainability of it would lead to its obliteration. "Let there be no confusion that there can always be a fusion between hearing and personal hearing," the judge said. —*PTI*

PROTEST AGAINST PRICE HIKE

BJP leaders and supporters protest against the State government for price hike on milk by KMF at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru, on Saturday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

193 ACCOUNTS UNDER LENS

SIT seizes ₹10 cr, 1 more held in Tribal Welfare Board scam

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the multi-crore Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation scam has seized Rs 10 crore from the accounts of gold shops, bars, and other commercial establishments in the State. The 10 crore was transferred from the board's account to 193 bank accounts linked to these establishments.

SIT also arrested Srinivas, an accused in the case, on Saturday. Srinivas has been accused of creating fake accounts and helping the accused carry out transactions. Four complaints in this regard have been filed in Bengaluru by victims whose names the fake accounts were created, and all four FIRs have been transferred to SIT. According to SIT, Rs 28 crore has allegedly been recovered in the case.

The scam in the corporation was exposed after the suicide of Chandrashekaran, 50, who was working as an Account Superintendent in the Tribal Welfare Board.

He was under pressure to move large sums of money to illegal accounts and allegedly committed suicide because of it. —*Salar News*

Darshan fans turn up daily outside jail to show support

MEGHANA PRASAD
BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

After Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa was sent to Bengaluru Central Prison on 22 June, his hundreds of fans have been turning up outside the jail daily to show their unwavering support to their beloved star.

The fans, with a mix of ages and genders, usually turn up at Parappana Agrahara Central Prison by around 10am. Coming from different parts of Karnataka, they hold placards and raise slogans in support of the actor.

Despite the scorching sun, they would stand resolutely. Many wore T-shirts bearing Darshan's image, while some held handmade banners proclaiming their faith in his innocence.

Around noon, police come and start dispersing the crowd. When police warn the fans of facing stern action, they started leaving the premises; but a few dozen linger at a distance.

Every time, there is a hearing in a court, Darshan's die-hard fans throng the premises, Ramamurthy S, a tea stall owner in the vicinity, told Salar News. "The fans block

Fans outside Parappana Agrahara Central Prison ***PHOTO: SALAR***

the road, but it is a good time for people like me. They buy a lot of tea and snacks and some people even stay here till night and have dinner and go. It's like a mini-festival out here," Ramamurthy said. One of the fans, P Ravi Gowda, a college student from Mysuru, said, "Darshan sir has always been our hero, not just on screen but in real life. We are here to let him know that he is not alone in this fight." Another fan, Lakshmi S, who had travelled from Tumakuru, said, "We believe in him, and we will wait as long as it takes." Darshan is currently under judicial custody facing charges in the murder of his fan Renukaswamy.

—*Salar News*

MAN HELD FOR HURLING STONES AT MOSQUE IN KOLAR

KOLAR, 29 JUNE

A 23-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly hurling stones at a mosque at Sonnavadi village in Mulbagal taluk.

The accused, Subramani works as a photographer in the village. On 26 June, authorities of Jamia Masjid complained to police that some miscreants had hurled stones at the mosque damaging the glass windows and trying to harm the sentiments of the minority community.

Based on the complaint, a police team led by sub-inspectors Vital Talvar and L Mamath arrested Subramani.

—*Salar News*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gangsters try to kill cops during arrest op in Raichur

RAICHUR, 29 JUNE

A group of gangsters on Kalaburgi Road in Lingasuguru town attempted to kill police officers during an arrest attempt, on Friday.

After a tip off, police inspector Pundalika Patattara and his team set up a trap to apprehend the criminals.

When the suspects' Scorpio vehicle neared Manikeshwari Mutt, they rammed it into the police jeep to escape.

The gang attacked the police officers using chilli powder, rods, and machetes.

The police managed to arrest three suspects Gururaja Suresh Chavan Yadgiri, Kumar Yamanappa Chavan Kanyakolurthanda, and Suresh Poolasingh Rathod Jinakeritand.

However, two suspects Thippanna Chandappa Rathoda and Manappa Om Rathoda from Kanyakulur, escaped. The police launched a search to find them.

Many locals and police constables Ranganatha Honnappa, Siddappa Manappa, and Sharanbasava Sabanna who were assaulted during the incident are currently receiving treatment at a public hospital.

—*Salar News*

Gadag gang attacks cops & escapes with accused

GADAG, 29 JUNE

A gang attacked a police convoy and freed a robbery suspect, in Gadag, on Saturday. The unidentified gang targeted a police vehicle transporting Amjad Ali Irani, a wanted criminal, from the Gangavati police station in Koppal district.

The attack occurred near the Gadag Railway Bridge. Irani was arrested by the police for a robbery case registered under IPC Section 392. According to Superintendent of Police BS Nemagouda, police were transporting Irani when his accomplices, who had likely followed the convoy, attacked the vehicle. The assault allowed Irani to escape. The miscreants also damaged the police vehicle by breaking its door. A search operation is underway to apprehend the gang members and the escaped suspect.

—*Salar News*

Court remands Prajwal to judicial custody till 8 July

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

A court remanded former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, who is facing charges of rape and sexual abuse of several women, to judicial custody till 8 July, on Saturday.

He was produced before the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court judge after his four-day Special Investigation Team (SIT) custody ended on Saturday.

On Monday, Prajwal was remanded to judicial custody till 8 July. But, he was later sent to SIT custody till 29 June by the Magistrate court judge, after the police sought a body warrant through Special Public Prosecutor (SPP).

Four separate cases have been registered against the 33-year-old grandson of the former Prime Minister D Deve Gowda, all of which are being investigated by the SIT.

Prajwal had failed in his bid to retain the Hassan constituency in the recently concluded LS polls.

The cases of sexual abuse came to light after pen-drives containing explicit videos allegedly involving Prajwal Revanna were reportedly circulated in Hassan, ahead of Lok Sabha polls there on 26 April. —*PTI*

Davangere officials crack whip on poultry farms

DAVANGERE, 29 JUNE

Davangere Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Suresh B Itnal has warned of closing down poultry farms at Hebbala village in the district if the owners do not take steps to contain the fly menace.

Hebbala gram panchayat has issued notices to the poultry farms, asking them to implement the training they received from the Animal Husbandry Department on controlling flies.

The village nestled between seven poultry farms in Davangere taluk has been hit by a fly infestation. The houses are overwhelmed by swarms of flies coming from nearby poultry farms.

The village has been plagued by fly menace since 2015. Businesses, particularly bakeries, grocery stores, salons and hotels, have been hit by the menace.

Many owners have been forced to close down their shops due to the infestation, which is affecting their ability to maintain hygiene and food safety standards. Despite filing complaints with authorities, villagers say the issue remains unresolved.

To contain the menace, the ZP CEO has cracked the whip on poultry farms. "The number of flies has increased in the current climate; flies are more in areas where there are poultry farms. Deputy Commissioner and I have directed Hebbal gram panchayat to act action against those who violate the rules."

—*Salar News*

IN CITY'S TASKER TOWN

Garbage pile leads to rat infestation

BENGALURU, 29 JUNE

Tasker Town in Shivajinagar is infested with rats due to the accumulation of garbage and the residents are bearing the brunt of it.

Residents of the quaint residential area say that on any given day, they can find about 10 rats scouring areas where garbage is accumulated. Pedestrians find it difficult to navigate the footpaths as rats lurch around them.

"This is a serious health hazard and BBMP should step in to eradicate this menace. Though we have complained to the civic authorities many times, our pleas have fallen on deaf ears," S Manjunath, a resident of Chinnaswamy Mudaliar Road, told **Salar News.**

Despite many plaints, no action has been taken by BBMP ***PHOTO: SALAR***

The residents of the area have given multiple complaints to BBMP. Civic workers came down and cleaned the area, but still, the menace has not been solved, he said.

Abdul Hafiz, a resident in the area, said, "I have asked in the BBMP WhatsApp group for the action to be taken to solve the menace but no response was given. Fed up with their apathy, I used my money to build concrete walls at the entrance of our area to keep the rats away and also to stop people from throwing.."

Abilash MM, BBMP Assistant Executive Engineer of Shivajinagar zone, told **Salar News** that he was unaware of the problem. He urged the residents to send him the locations of rats-infested areas with photographs. "I will send people to clean up the area."

Khaleel Rahman, a resident of the area, said, "The rats are a menace; they bite the wires in the vehicles and snap them. When it is monsoon, the water accumulates in these areas leading to the breeding of mosquitoes." The rats enter houses and eat up their ration and sometimes their clothes as well, according to resident of the area. —*Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

Veteran Congress leader D Srinivas dies at 76

HYDERABAD, 29 JUNE

Former Andhra Pradesh (undivided) Congress president D Srinivas died here on Saturday, his son and Nizamabad MP D Arvind said. He was 76. Srinivas had been unwell for the past few days, family sources said. He was the PCC President during the 2004 and 2009 assembly and general elections. He was also a minister in former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhar Reddy's cabinet. He left Congress and became a BRS Rajya Sabha member from 2016 to 2022 and later rejoined the grand old party. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Telangana ministers, and senior leaders of the Congress party expressed condolences over his demise. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu also condoled the death of Srinivas. Naidu noted that Srinivas worked as a minister and MP, upholding the values he believed in. *—PTI*

Delhi cops lodge FIR in Owaisi house vandalism case

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Delhi Police have registered a case after All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen Chief Asaduddin Owaisi filed a complaint about vandalism at his Delhi residence. A group of people gathered outside the residence of AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi. A group of people had raised slogans and splashed black paint on name plate. Delhi Police officials said a case under sections 143, 506, 153A and 147 of the Indian Penal Code was lodged at the Parliament Street Police station. *—PTI*

AAP's Sanjay skips Covid case hearing at UP court

SULTANPUR, 29 JUNE

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh did not appear before an MP-MLA court here on Saturday in a 2021 Covid-19 norms violation case, citing his preoccupation with the ongoing Parliament session. The court will now hear the matter on 6 July. Singh's advocate Madan Singh said his client could not appear before the special MP-MLA court due to the ongoing Parliament session. An application on his absence was filed in the court, which fixed 6 July as the next date of hearing. During the last hearing, court had issued a bailable warrant against Singh for skipping several hearings and fixed 29 June as the next date of hearing. *—PTI*

NDPP sweeps civic polls in Nagaland

KOHIMA, 29 JUNE

The ruling NDPP swept the civic body polls in Nagaland on Saturday, winning all three municipal councils and most of the town councils, officials said. NDPP won all three municipal councils -- Kohima, Mokokchung and Dimapur. Of the 21 town councils, it secured a majority in all, except Wokha, Bhandari and Phek, officials said. NDPP, which had already won five of the 19 seats in the Kohima Municipal Council unopposed, added eight more after the final declaration of result, securing a majority. The lowest winning margin was recorded in a seat of the Chantongya Town Council where NDPP candidate Temjennungsang won against Independent nominee A Limasanen by just one vote. A total of 64 candidates -- 45 of NDPP, seven of BJP, five of NCP, three of Congress, two of NPF and two Independents had won unopposed in this election from different municipal and town councils. *—PTI*

CBI arrests scribe after raids in J'khand, Gujarat over NEET

CBI gets custody of four accused arrested in paper leak

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches at seven locations in Gujarat on Saturday in connection with the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG exam and arrested a journalist in Jharkhand, officials said.

According to them, Jamaluddin Ansari, a journalist with a Hindi newspaper, was arrested on Friday for allegedly trying to help the principal and vice principal of a Hazaribagh school, both of whom are accused in the paper leak case.

CBI on Saturday searched the premises of suspects in Anand, Kheda, Ahmedabad and Godhra districts of Gujarat. The probe agency is investigating a larger conspiracy spread across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Bihar, Delhi and Jharkhand.

Gujarat police had arrested five people last month in the case.

Meanwhile, a court remanded four accused arrested in connection with alleged NEET-UG malpractices held at a school near Godhra in Gujarat in CBI custody till 2 July.

The CBI has registered six FIRs in the case PHOTO: PTI

The court granted four-day custody of Jay Jalaram School's principal Purushottam Sharma, teacher Tushar Bhatt, and middlemen Vibhor Anand and Arif Vohra, all of whom are alleged to be involved in irregularities in the 5 May NEET-UG exam in Godhra.

The Gujarat police had arrested five people, including the principal and the teacher, in connection with the paper leak case.

Jharkhand's Oasis School's principal Ehsanul Haque and vice principal Imtiaz Alam have already been arrested by the federal probe agency in connection with the medical entrance exam paper leak case. According to sources, the accused allegedly asked candidates arranged by them from Odisha, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to mark Godhra as their examination centre and choose Gujarati as their language, they said.

"Investigation conducted till date has revealed that the accused persons who were given the responsibility of carrying out the examination in a free, fair and transparent manner were themselves involved in arranging candidates and facilitating them to attain good marks in the NEET exam for a hefty consideration," an official in the known of developments said.

The candidates arranged by the accused allegedly showed Panchmahal and Vadodara in Gujarat as their addresses, officials said.

The CBI has registered six FIRs in the case. The FIR from Bihar pertains to leakage of paper while remaining from Gujarat and Rajasthan pertains to impersonation of candidates and cheating. *—PTI*

Date for NEET-PG to be announced within two days: Pradhan

CHANDIGARH, 29 JUNE

The new schedule for NEET-PG will be announced by the National Board of Examinations (NBE) within the next two days, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Saturday.

NEET-PG is among the exams cancelled last week as a pre-emptive measure amid a raging row over alleged irregularities in competitive tests.

The comments by Pradhan come a day after the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced revised dates for three exams which were cancelled.

Meanwhile, he slammed Congress, saying it wants to run away from a discussion in Parliament over the NEET exam issue.

His remark came a day after Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold a "respectful" and good discussion in Parliament on the issue of alleged irregularities in the conduct of the NEET exam.

Dharmendra Pradhan PHOTO: PTI

Replying to a question on the opposition targeting the BJP-led Centre over the NEET exam issue, Pradhan said, "The Congress does not want a discussion. It wants to run away from the discussion. It's only intention is to create chaos, confusion and create obstacles in smooth functioning of the entire institutional mechanism." *—PTI*

Sanjay Jha named JD(U)'s working Prez; seeks Bihar spl status

JD(U)'s new working President Sanjay Jha said that his party's purpose was to get central assistance for Bihar PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/SANJAYJHAJDU

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

The Janata Dal (United) on Saturday appointed Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha as its working president and urged the Centre to consider either special category status or special package for Bihar, underlining the party's important role in the formation of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government.

The party's national executive meeting chaired by its president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar flagged price rise and unemployment as "burning issues", as its political resolution expressed confidence that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government would take more effective steps to handle them. The resolution called for extensive probe into paper leak cases to ensure stringent action against the guilty so as to maintain the credibility of central competitive exams. There is also a need for Parliament to enact a strong law against leaks of examination papers, it added.

Kumar's decision to appoint his confidant as the party's working president, a position not held by anyone, suggests his efforts to maintain better coordination with the BJP and draw a helpful bargain as Jha enjoys good ties with the national party's leadership. A former minister in Bihar, Jha was originally in the BJP and served as its link with Kumar before crossing over to the JD(U).

The Mithilanchal leader has long been a trusted aide of his ageing mentor who has burnt his fingers in the past due to shifting loyalties of his ostensibly reliable colleagues, including former JD(U) president RCP Singh, now in the BJP. Following his appointment, Jha said his party's purpose was to get central assistance for Bihar to build on the foundation laid by the Kumar-led government since 2005, except for a short period when Jitan Ram Manjhi was chief minister. *—PTI*

AAP PROTESTS KEJRI'S ARREST, 20 DETAINED

JAMMU, 29 JUNE

Over 20 workers of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) were detained on Saturday after they tried to hold a protest outside the BJP headquarters here against the arrest of party convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, officials said.

AAP activists led by led by party leader Om Prakash Khajuria assembled near Trikuta Nagar as part of the nationwide protest against the arrest of Kejriwal and tried to move towards the BJP office but were stopped by police, they said. Kejriwal was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation in connection with the Delhi government's now-scrapped excise policy. On 21 March, he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money-laundering case linked to the policy. He was granted bail by a trial court that was stayed by the Delhi High Court.

The protesters were carrying placards and shouting slogans against BJP. *—PTI*

M'rashtra starts new pilgrimage scheme for elderly of all faiths

MUMBAI, 29 JUNE

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday announced 'Mukhyamantri Teerth Darshan Yojana', a pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens from all religions.

The scheme will help elderly people who are unable to visit the pilgrimage sites on their own, he said. Shinde made the announcement in the state legislative Assembly while replying to a calling attention notice by Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik.

Sarnaik highlighted that many senior citizens cannot fulfil their dream of going on pilgrimages due to financial constraints, lack of companionship, or insufficient information about pilgrimage arrangements. Rules will be framed for the scheme and the government will facilitate the pilgrimage of senior citizens from all religions who are unable to do it on their own, he said. In his demand, Sarnaik said senior citizens cannot fulfil their dream of going on a pilgrimage because of financial problems or they have nobody to accompany them. Also, they do not have any information about how they can go for the pilgrimage. *—PTI with Agencies*

Court sends Kejriwal to custody till 12 July

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

A court here on Saturday sent Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to judicial custody till 12 July in a corruption case related to the alleged excise scam.

Kejriwal was produced in the court by the CBI after the end of his three-day custodial interrogation.

The CBI sought 14 days jail for Kejriwal, saying his incarceration was required "in the interest of the investigation and justice".

Allowing the plea, Special Judge Sunena Sharma said that Kejriwal be produced in the court on 12 July.

A detailed order from the court is awaited.

Kejriwal was arrested by the CBI in connection with irregularities in his government's excise policy.

On 21 March, he was arrested by the Enforcement Directoratein a money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped policy.

He was granted bail by a trial court that was stayed by the Delhi High Court. *—PTI*

J'khand will oust BJP in Assembly polls: Soren

RANCHI, 29 JUNE

Former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren on Saturday slammed the BJP for allegedly hatching a conspiracy against him and claimed that the saffron party will be wiped out from the state after the assembly elections due later this year.

Addressing Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) workers at his residence, Soren said there would be a "revolt against those who plotted the conspiracy" to confine him in jail and "people of Jharkhand would not spare BJP".

Soren was released on Friday from the Birsa Munda Jail after the state High Court granted bail to him in a money laundering case, observing that he was prima facie not guilty, and there was no likelihood of the petitioner committing an offence on bail.

Hemant Soren PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

The JMM leader was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on 31 January in connection with its investigation into the money laundering case linked to the illegal possession of 8.36 acres of land. He alleged that the BJP has controlled all constitutional establishments but people taught them a lesson in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. *—PTI*

'CBI probe into Cooch Behar issue'

Kolkata, 29 June

BJP state General Secretary Agnimitra Paul on Saturday demanded a CBI probe into the alleged incident of stripping and physical torture of a woman leader of the saffron party in West Bengal's Coochbehar district, accusing police of inaction against the real perpetrators.

Paul claimed that the woman was beaten and stripped by TMC miscreants. *—PTI*

Birla's comments on Emergency not apt: Pawar

KOLHAPUR, 29 JUNE

NCP (SP) President Sharad Pawar on Saturday said the reference to Emergency made by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in his speech was not apt and did not suit the stature of his post.

Addressing reporters here, Pawar also said the sops announced in the budget presented by his estranged nephew and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday, was just an effort ahead of the state assembly polls to project that they are doing something massive.

Soon after his election as Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla on Wednesday set off a firestorm by reading out a resolution condemning the imposition of Emergency as an attack on the Constitution by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi. Pawar said, "The speaker's reference to the Emergency in his address did not suit the stature of the post. It has been 50 years since the Emergency, Indira Gandhi is no longer alive. So why is the speaker bringing up this issue now?" "Is it the role of the speaker to make a political statement? We think his statement was not apt. The President's speech also had a brief mention of this issue." he said. Meanwhile, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) Chief and former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav on Saturday recalled what they went through during the dark days of Emergency and said that the then prime minister Indira Gandhi put many of the leaders behind bars, but she never abused them. *—PTI*

HEALTHCARE URGENCY

Experts urge govt to better health schemes

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Echoing the urgency of healthcare reforms ranging from restructuring of Ayushman Bharat Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to accelerating the digital health mission, experts and industry leaders have outlined key priorities for the Modi government in its third consecutive term.

Healthcare experts have expressed concerns about whether the government in its new term will make any difference by increasing public expenditure on healthcare to the desired level in India.

Notably, the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017, which promises to increase public health spending to 2.5 percent of the GDP, remains overdue even as Indians rely heavily on private services.

There are concerns whether new government will make any difference by increasing public expenditure on healthcare PHOTO: PTI & FREEPIK

Dr Girdhar Gyani, Director General, AHPI (Association of Healthcare Providers, India) said, "In the upcoming term, we urge the government to prioritise a comprehensive approach to fostering a 'Healthy India'. This entails promoting preventive health measures focusing on sanitation, clean drinking water, and nutrition, alongside the rapid implementation of health and wellness Centres for preventive health education and screening."

He also highlighted the importance of incentivising the private sector to establish tertiary care facilities in tier-III cities.

Expressing his views, Probal Ghosal, chairman and director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals said, "As we embark on the next five-year term under the newly-elected government, there's a prime opportunity to catalyse transformation in the healthcare infrastructure, enhancing the lives of millions." *—PTI*

Congress slams PM over Adani's links with China

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over a news report that the Adani Group has "selected eight Chinese companies to help" its solar manufacturing project and called for a strategy "to wean India of its dependence on China".

He said it has to be ensured that the taxpayers' money does not benefit Chinese companies. On 'X', Ramesh said, "The non-biological Prime Minister infamously told the nation on 19 June, 2020, after the Galwan clashes that 'Na koi hamari seema mein ghus aaya hai, na hi koi ghusa hua hai (Neither has anyone entered our borders, nor has anyone occupied territories)'."

"However, he shows no hesitation in liberally issuing visas to Chinese workers to help one of his 'tempowallah' buddies," he said on 'X'. Ramesh said it is "bad enough that these concessions are being made even as the Chinese continue to occupy 2,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in eastern Ladakh". He claimed that India's imports from China have shot up from USD 70 billion in 2018-19 to USD 101 billion in 2023-24. *—PTI*

Jairam Ramesh PHOTO: PTI

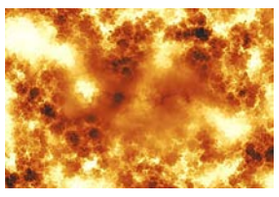


PHOTO: PIXABAY

4 workers killed in explosion at TN fireworks unit

VIRUDHUNAGAR, 29JUNE

Four workers were killed and another person was injured on Saturday following an explosion at a firecracker manufacturing unit near here, police said. The workers were killed on the spot and the cause for the explosion and blaze is suspected to be mishandling the chemical ingredients, the raw materials, that go into the making of firecrackers, a senior district police official said. Another person who was in the vicinity was injured and buildings --rooms earmarked for specific tasks involved in manufacturing processes-- have suffered damage, he added. Chief Minister MK Stalin, expressing anguish and conveying his condolences to the kin of the deceased, announced a solatium of Rs three lakh to each of the families of the four dead workers.*—PTI*

Man shot dead by assailants dressed as delivery agents

GURUGRAM, 29 JUNE

A 25-year-old man was shot dead allegedly by two bike-borne assailants dressed as food and grocery delivery agents in a village here, police said on Saturday. The incident took place around 9pm on Friday when Anuj, who worked as a bouncer, was in a market area in Gurugram district's Ullahwas village, a senior police officer said. The the bike-borne duo, dressed in uniforms of Zomato and Blinkit, allegedly fired five bullets at Anuj and fled the spot, the officer said. The victim was taken to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, the police said. Anuj was a resident of Kadarpur village and worked as a bouncer with a private liquor outlet, they said.*—PTI*

Woman cons neighbour of ₹6L using AI-made voice

THANE, 29 JUNE

Police have arrested a woman from Kashimira in Maharashtra's Thane district for allegedly duping her female neighbour to the tune of more than Rs 6 lakh by calling her and posing as a man, whose voice she created using artificial intelligence (AI), an official said on Saturday. The arrest was made on Thursday, he said. "The accused woman, Rashmi Kar, cheated her female neighbour and threatened her into paying Rs 6.6 lakh in various instalments by posing as a man. Although the victim never met the caller, she ended up paying the money through digital platforms," the police official said. *—PTI*

Man beaten to death in Kolkata over theft suspicion

KOLKATA, 29 JUNE

A man was allegedly beaten to death in Salt Lake area on Saturday for "mobile phone theft", less than 24 hours after a person died when he was roughed up over a similar suspicion, police said. Three people have been arrested in connection with the incident that took place in Polenite area a little after midnight, they said. The deceased, identified as Prasen Mondal, was declared "brought dead" when he was taken to a hospital, a police officer said. "We are questioning the arrested persons and further investigation is underway," he said. On Friday, another person was allegedly beaten to death at a state-run hostel for students in Kolkata's Bowbazar area over suspicion of mobile phone theft, according to police. Irshad Alam,37, a resident of Belgachia, used to work as a mechanic at an electronics shop in Chandni Chowk.Fourteen people were arrested in connection with Friday's incident, they said.*—PTI*

Kin of Delhi airport collapse victim mull legal action

Civil Aviation Minister announced Rs 20 lakh aid for family

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

The son of the 45-year-old cab driver who died after a portion of a canopy at the Delhi airport collapsed amid heavy rains said the family will take a decision on filing a case in the matter after his father's cremation.

The police handed over the body of the cab driver, Ramesh Kumar, to his family after postmortem at the Safdarjung Hospital on Saturday, a day after the incident, officials said.

"At around 12.30pm, we received the body of my father after postmortem and we will return to our house. We will go for cremation at around 3.30pm near our house," Ramesh's 25-year-old son Ravinder said.

He said after his father's cremation, all the family members will discuss and decide whether they would file a case against those responsible for his father's death.

Ramesh was waiting for some passengers at the IGI T-1 Friday early morning when a portion of a canopy covering the departure area collapsed on parked cars amid three hours of heavy rain in the national capital. Six people were also injured in the incident, prompting authorities to suspend flight departures.

On Friday, Ravinder had told PTI that he was sleeping when he got a call from the police station asking him to come to the Delhi airport's Terminal 1 immediately.

Ravinder, who is also a cab driver by profession, was sleeping after finishing his night shift when he got to know about his father's death on Friday.Ramesh is survived by his wife Asha, two sons, Ravinder and Ashish,22, and two daughters, Rashi,21, and Bhawana,18, -- all of whom stay at a rented house in Vijay Vihar area of Rohini close to Sector 7. Asha works as a domestic help in Rohini.

Upset over the compensation amount offered by the government, Ravinder had said that he had recently purchased the vehicle for Rs 5 lakh and had to make a down payment of Rs 1 lakh.

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, who visited the airport and took stock of the situation at T1, announced a compensation of Rs 20 lakh for the family.

—PTI

Family members of the taxi driver who was killed after a portion of the roof of Indira Gandhi International Airport's Terminal 1 collapsed mourn, on Saturday

PHOTO: PTI

- Ramesh was waiting for some passengers at the IGI T-1 Friday early morning when a portion of a canopy covering the departure area collapsed on parked cars amid three hours of heavy rain in the national capital

DELHI WALL COLLAPSE: BODIES OF 3 WORKERS FOUND

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

The bodies of three labourers were on Saturday pulled from the rubble of a wall that collapsed at a construction site in the Vasant Vihar area here amid heavy rain, officials said.

With this, the number of people killed in rain-related incidents in Delhi has climbed to eight.The under-construction wall collapsed on Friday and the incident was reported to the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) around 5.30am.DFS officials said the bodies of three labourers have been pulled from the rubble. Two of them have been identified as Santosh Kumar Yadav,19, and Santosh,38. The third labourer is yet to be identified.Cranes were used to clear the debris and water was pumped out of the foundation pit to recover the bodies. The bodies were taken to Safdarjung Hospital, they said. Delhi is likely to receive heavy rainfall over the next two days. The IMD has issued an 'orange' alert for heavy rain for the next four days.

—PTI

People walk through a flooded street following rains, in Ayodhyay on Saturday

PHOTO: PTI

Officials fired after road caves in on Ram Path in UP

AYODHYA, 29 JUNE

The Uttar Pradesh government has suspended six officials of civic agencies for gross negligence following road cave-ins and waterlogging at several sections of the newly-built Ram Path in Ayodhya.

About 15 bylanes and streets along the Ram Path were flooded after rain on 23 and 25 June. Even homes along the road went under water.

Portions of the 14-kilometre road stretch also caved in at more than a dozen places.

The suspended officials are Dhruv Aggarwal (executive engineer), Anuj Deshwal (assistant engineer) and Prabhat Pandey (junior engineer) of the Public Works Department (PWD) and Anand Kumar Dubey (executive engineer), Rajendra Kumar Yadav (assistant engineer) and Mohammad Shahid (junior engineer) of the Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam.

Aggarwal and Deshwal were suspended on the orders of special secretary Vinod Kumar on Friday. Pandey's suspension order was issued by PWD chief engineer (development) VK Srivastav.

Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam managing director Rakesh Kumar Mishra issued the orders for the three engineers' suspension.

The state government has also issued a notice to Ahmedabad-based contractor Bhuvan Infracom Private Limited in connection with the matter.

The PWD's office order stated that the upper-most layer of the Ram Path was damaged shortly after its construction, showing laxity in the work done under top priority of the Uttar Pradesh government and damaging the image of the state among common people. *—PTI*

CHANDRACHUD TO COURTS

'Constitutional morality' must to preserve diversity'

KOLKATA, 29 JUNE

Espousing the importance of implementing 'Constitutional Morality' in Indian jurisprudence, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud on Saturday insisted on the commitment of courts to ensure diversity, inclusion and tolerance.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the two-day East Zone II Regional Conference of the National Judicial Academy, the CJI also focused on the importance of technological advancements in the justice delivery system.

Underlining the country's federal structure that's "marked by a great deal of diversity", the CJI focused on the role of judges in "preserving the diversity of India".

"I am reticent when people call courts a temple of justice. Because that would mean the judges are deities which they are not. They are instead servers of the people, who deliver justice with compassion and empathy," CJI said at the conference titled 'Contemporary Judicial Developments and Strengthening Justice Through Law and Technology'.

Calling judges "servants and not masters of the Constitution", the CJI warned the judiciary of the pitfalls of personal values and belief systems of judges interfering with judgments that are opposed to values enshrined in the Constitution. "Too very often, we are addressed as Honour or as Lordship or as Ladyship. There is a very grave danger when people say that the court is a temple of justice. There is a grave danger that we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples,"CJI said while addressing the Regional Conference of National Judicial Academy in Kolkata.

"We could be masters of Constitutional interpretation, but a just society is established with the court's vision of Constitutional Morality," he said.CJI spoke of AI-assisted software aiding the work-in-progress to translate the 37,000-odd Supreme Court judgments delivered since Independence from English into all Constitution-recognised regional languages. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

> **Very often, we are addressed as Honour or as Lordship or as Ladyship. There is a very grave danger when people say that the court is a temple of justice.There is a grave danger that we perceive ourselves as the deities in those temples**
>
> -DY Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India

PVT FIRM BOOKED FOR POLLUTING PERIYAR RIVER

KOCHI, 29 JUNE

A case has been registered against a private company for allegedly polluting Periyar river near Kochi weeks after protests by environmental activists and locals against the alleged illegal discharge of chemical effluents into the waterbody, which posed a threat to the biodiversity in it. The state Pollution Control Board also reportedly slapped a notice on the institution, one among the several companies located on the banks of Periyar river here, after the violation was detected during their recent patrolling, sources said.

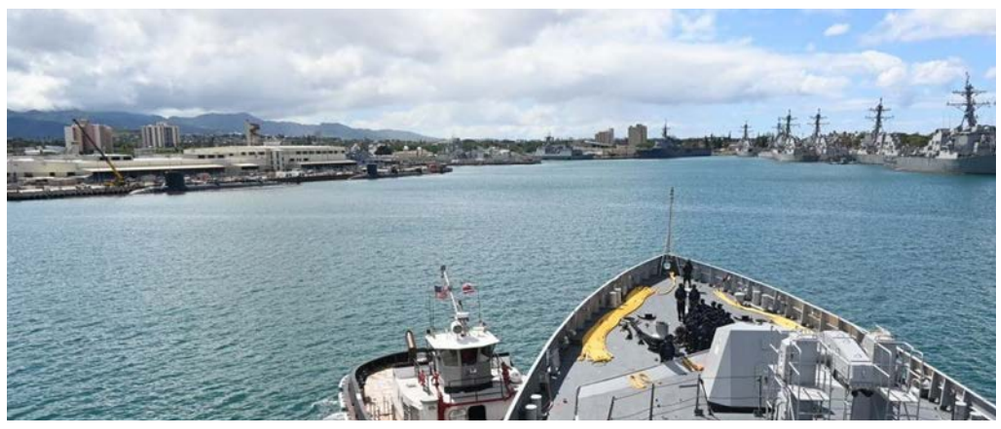
Police and the PCB adopted the tough stand against the firm amidst a raging row over the recent mass death of fish in Periyar river.

Kochi had witnessed widespread protests by fish farmers, local people, environmental activists and political parties after dead fish were found floating in large numbers in fish farms across panchayats such as Varapuzha, Kadamakkudy, and Cheranalloor near here last month

A police officer said a case was registered against the company based on a complaint from Shabeer, a local environment activist. "The case was registered for releasing effluents in the water body and polluting it. IPC Sections 269 and 277 were invoked against it," he said.

According to sources, the authorities and activists have been patrolling the industrial area along the banks of Periyar for some time. *—PTI*

IN HAWAI



Indian Navy's indigenous stealth frigate INS Shivalik arrives to participate in 29th edition of Exercise Rim of the Pacific, at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii.

PHOTO: PTI

Post hooch tragedy, Tamil Nadu amends Prohibition Act, bootleggers to get lifer

CHENNAI, 29 JUNE

Days after the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy in the state that claimed over 60 lives, the Tamil Nadu government on Saturday amended a prohibition act to substantially enhance the punishment, which included life imprisonment for bootleggers in case of fatalities following consumption of spurious liquor.

The state government amended the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937 to enhance the punishment term and quantum of fine for offences like manufacture, possession and selling of illicit liquor that endangers lives.

The Tamil Nadu Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 2024, which shall come into force on such date as notified by the government, aims to completely eradicate the menace of illicit liquor from the state.

The amendment substantially enhances the term of imprisonment and quantum of fine for various offences under sections 4,5,6,7 and 11 of the Act.Accordingly, a maximum punishment of 10 years Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) and a penalty of up to Rs 5 lakh has been proposed in the amendment.

In case of death due to consumption of illicit liquor, then the punishment for bootleggers will be RI for life with a fine not less than Rs 10 lakh, it said.

The Kallakurichi hooch tragedy that happened about a fortnight ago, had left about 63 people dead, including women and a transgender. *—PTI*

The amendment came in wake of the hoonch tragedy

PHOTO: PTI

7 dead as 2 cars collide on Samruddhi Expressway

JALNA, 29 JUNE

Seven people were killed and three others seriously injured after two cars collided on the Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway, also known as Samruddhi Expressway, in Jalna district of Maharashtra, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred around 11pm on Friday near Kadvanchi village, they said.

The victims were residents of Malad (East) in Mumbai and Buldhana district, the police said.

"A multi-utility vehicle (MUV) going from Nagpur to Mumbai and a car heading in the opposite direction collided head-on, resulting in the death of six persons on the spot. One more person succumbed to injuries at a hospital later," a police official said.

The impact of the collision was so severe that the MUV broke through the crash barrier and fell off on the left side of the road. Local villagers and police rushed to the scene to rescue the persons trapped in mangled remains of the vehicles, he said.

Dr Umesh Jadhav, a medical officer at the Government District Hospital in Jalna, said six bodies were brought to the hospital for post-mortem. Three injured persons are being treated here, while one critically injured person who was shifted to the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district died later. *—PTI*

PROBE ON

Docs operate on boy's genitals instead of leg

THANE, 29 JUNE

The parents of a nine-year-old boy from Shahapur in Maharashtra's Thane district have complained to the police that doctors at a government-run hospital wrongly performed a surgery on his private part instead of an injured leg.

Following their allegation, a health official assured an inquiry into the episode, and the police said they are carrying out a probe.

The minor's parents said, "The boy suffered an injury on his leg while he was playing with his friends last month. He was admitted to the sub-district hospital in Shahapur on 15 June and was undergoing treatment. The doctors recently performed a circumcision surgery on his private part instead of the injured leg."

Later, after realising their goof-up, the doctors conducted a surgery on his injured leg soon afterwards, they told reporters.

The parents also lodged a complaint with the Shahapur police. Although no case has been registered so far in this connection, a police official said that a probe into the complaint was underway.

District Civil Surgeon Dr Kailas Pawar said the health authorities will conduct an inquiry into the allegations.

Medical officer at the hospital, Gajendra Pawar, told reporters that besides his leg injury, the boy also had a problem of phimosis (tight foreskin).

"We had to carry out two operations," he said.

As regards informing the parents about the second operation, he said the doctors might have forgotten to tell them or they might have told the other relatives of the patient.

What the doctors did was right and there was nothing wrong in it. But the parents refused to accept the explanation given by the doctors, Pawar said.

On the same day, two patients from the same age group underwent surgery at the hospital, doctors said. *—PTI*

Doctors at a government-run hospital wrongly performed a surgery on his private part instead of an injured leg

PHOTO: PIXABAY

- The parents also lodged a complaint with the Shahapur police. Although no case has been registered so far in this connection, a police official said that a probe into the complaint was underway. District Civil Surgeon Dr Kailas Pawar said the authorities will conduct an inquiry

AMARNATH YATRA

Pilgrims wait in a queue to get themselves registered for the annual Amarnath Yatra, in Jammu. The annual Amarnath Yatra began on Saturday as the first batch of pilgrims left the twin base camps in Baltal and Nunwan to start their journey to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said. ***PHOTO: PTI***

Can Democrats replace Biden as their nominee?

President Joe Biden, left, and Republican presidential candidate former president Donald Trump during a presidential debate hosted in Atlanta ***PHOTO: PTI***

President Joe Biden's halting debate performance on Thursday night has led some in his own party to begin questioning whether he should be replaced on the ballot before November.

There is no evidence Biden is willing to end his campaign.

And it would be nearly impossible for Democrats to replace him unless he chooses to step aside. Here's why:

Delegates bound to Biden

Every state has already held its presidential primary. Democratic rules mandate that the delegates Biden won remain bound to support him at the party's upcoming national convention unless he tells them he's leaving the race.

Biden indicated that he had no plans to do that, telling supporters in Atlanta shortly after he left the debate stage, "Let's keep going." Biden campaign spokeswoman Lauren Hill was even clearer, saying Friday: "Of course he's not dropping out."

The conventions and their rules are controlled by the political parties. The Democratic National Committee could convene before the convention opens on August 19 and change how things will work, but that isn't likely as long as Biden wants to continue seeking reelection.

The current rules read: "Delegates elected to the national convention pledged to a presidential candidate shall in all good conscience reflect the sentiments of those who elected them."

Might Kamala Harris replace Biden?

The vice president is Biden's running mate, but that doesn't mean she can swap in for him at the top of the ticket by default. Biden also can't decree that she replace him should he suddenly decide to leave the race.

The Democratic National Convention is being held in Chicago, but the party has announced that it will hold a virtual roll call to formally nominate Biden before in-person proceedings begin. The exact date for the roll call has not yet been set.

If Biden opts to abandon his reelection campaign, Harris would likely join other top Democratic candidates looking to replace him. But that would probably create a scenario where she and others end up lobbying individual state delegations at the convention for their support.

That hasn't happened for Democrats since 1960, when John F Kennedy and Lyndon B Johnson jockeyed for votes during that year's Democratic convention in Los Angeles.

What about other potential Democratic candidates?

In addition to the vice president, others that had endorsed Biden in 2024 while harboring their own presidential aspirations for future cycles include California Gov Gavin Newsom, Michigan Gov Gretchen Whitmer, Pennsylvania Gov Josh Shapiro, Illinois Gov J B Pritzker and California Rep Ro Khanna.

Still others who Biden bested during the party's 2020 presidential primary could also try again, including Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, as well as Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

If Biden were to abruptly leave the race, conservative groups have suggested they will file lawsuits around the country, potentially questioning the legality of the Democratic candidate's name on the ballot.

But Elaine Kamarck, a senior fellow in governance studies at the Brookings Institution in Washington, who wrote a book about the presidential nominating process and is also a member of the Democratic National Committee's rulemaking arm, said that courts have consistently stayed out of political primaries as long as parties running them weren't doing anything that would contradict other constitutional rights, such as voter suppression based on race.

"This is very clear constitutionally that this is in the party's purview," Kamarck said in an interview before the debate.

"The business of nominating someone to represent a political party is the business of the political party." —*PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساہر

Kids pacified with phones may have anger issues

The study found that poorer behaviour control in a child meant parents resorting to digital devices often ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Pacifying children by handing them digital devices when they are throwing tantrums can disable them in managing emotions later in life, which can grow into anger management issues, a research has found.

Conversely, parents of children, who already had poor emotional control, were found to be overly relying on electronic devices to silence them, worsening the pre-existing conditions.

It is known that a child learns much about self-control, including how to choose a deliberate response over an automatic one, during the first few years of their life.

However, a team of researchers from Hungary and Canada found that the recent trend of distracting children by showing them content on tablets and smartphones to control their unpleasant emotional responses can cripple their ability to effectively recognise and manage emotions later in life.

"Tantrums cannot be cured by digital devices. Children have to learn how to manage their negative emotions for themselves. They need the help of their parents during this learning process, not the help of a digital device," Veronika Konok, a researcher at Eotvos Lorand University, Hungary, and first author of the study published in the journal Frontiers in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, said.

Following 300 parents of children -- aged two to five years old over a period of one year -- the researchers found that children, who were pacified using digital devices, showed poorer anger and frustration management skills. Parents were asked to respond to questionnaires which assessed how they and their children used media.

Conversely, the team also found that poorer behaviour control in a child meant parents resorting to digital devices more often as a management tool.

The more the children were given devices when they threw tantrums, the lesser they were seen to make a deliberate effort in order to control their behaviour, the authors found.

"It's not surprising that parents more frequently (use digital devices to calm children down) if their child has emotion regulation problems, but our results highlight that this strategy can lead to the escalation of a pre-existing issue," Konok said.

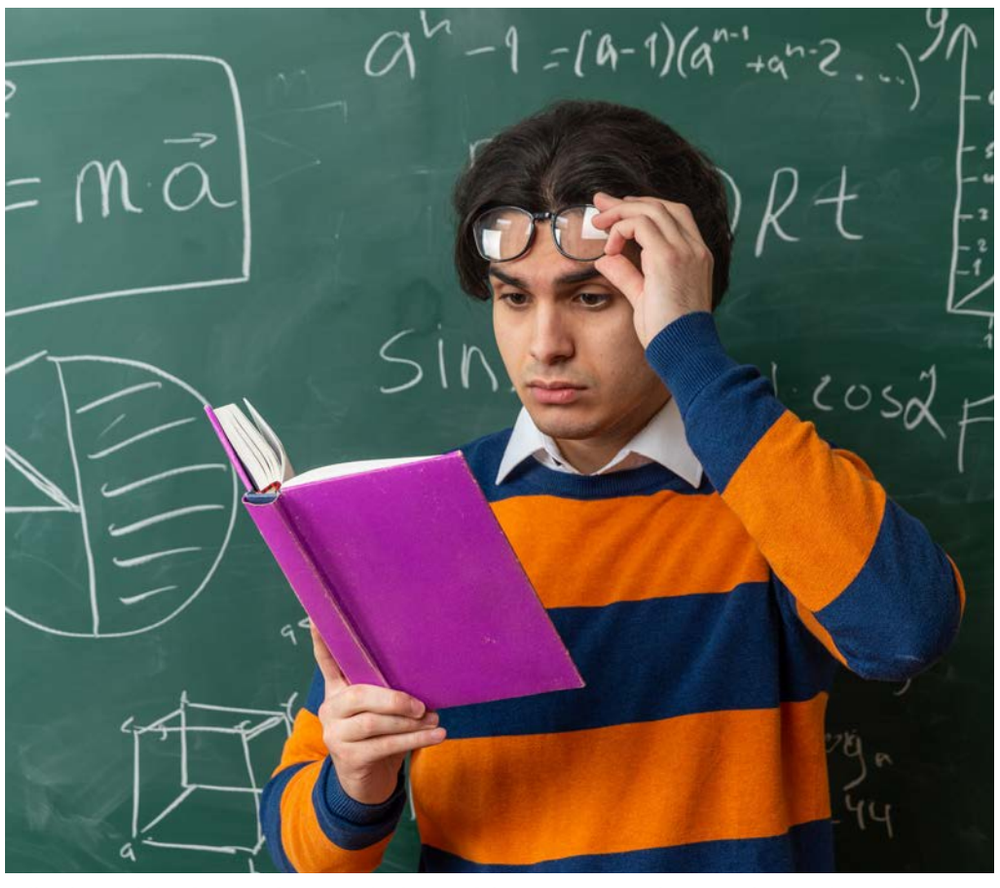
Stressing the importance of not avoiding situations frustrating for the child, the researchers recommended that the parents coach their children through difficult moments, help them recognise and handle their emotions.

The authors also said that the parents should receive support from health professionals through training and counselling methods, which their findings could help inform.

This could benefit children's mental health and well-being, they said. —*PTI*

Studies shows that parents of children, who already had poor emotional control, were found to be relying on electronic devices to silence them, worsening pre-existing conditions ***PHOTO: UNSPLASH***

80% maths teachers in India falter on basic mathematical questions



India's low ranking of 72 out of 73 countries in one of the assessment underscores the prevalence of rote memorisation in classrooms and widening gap in conceptual understanding ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Nearly 80 per cent of in-service math teachers across India and the Middle East falter on basic concepts such as ratio, proportional reasoning, algebraic reasoning, estimation and logical reasoning, according to a new study.

The study assessed over 1300 in-service mathematics teachers of classes 3, 4, 5 and 6 students across 152 schools in India, UAE, Oman a nd Saudi Arabia over two years.

The study titled "Analysis of In-Service Mathematics Teachers' Subject Knowledge and Misconceptions on Primary and Middle-Grade Mathematics Concepts" was conducted by Ei, a leading EdTech company.

During the study, 1357 teachers undertook the TIPS (Teacher Impact Programmes) - Math Subject Knowledge - Level 1 assessment, which not only measures teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge but also shares detailed reports with the test-takers and school principals.

Among those who took the assessment, 80 per cent of the teachers were from India, 18 per cent from UAE and 1 per cent each from Oman and Saudi Arabia.

- The study assessed over 1300 in-service mathematics teachers of classes 3, 4, 5 and 6 students across 152 schools in India, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia over two years

According to the study, 75 per cent of teachers struggled to answer 50 per cent of the questions correctly and a mere 25 per cent could accurately answer only 25 per cent of the questions asked.

"A staggering 80 per cent faltered on concepts such as ratio, proportional reasoning, algebraic reasoning, estimation, and logical reasoning - skills crucial for real-life problem-solving.

While 73.3 per cent of the teachers answered grade 4 questions correctly, only 36.7 per cent could answer the questions based on grade 7 topics," the report said.

"This parallel between teacher and student misconceptions is particularly alarming, suggesting a cyclical challenge in mathematical education where errors may be perpetuated through generations of learners," it added.

The report noted that misunderstandings were also found in geometric concepts, where 32.9 per cent of teachers erroneously believed that the perimeter of a shape formed by joining parts is simply the sum of the perimeters of those parts, indicating a lack of understanding of basic geometric properties.

"A considerable proportion of teachers (36.3 per cent) demonstrated a misunderstanding in ordering decimals, incorrectly comparing the decimal part of numbers as whole numbers, which showcases a fundamental misconception in understanding place value and the properties of decimals," it said.

Misconceptions surrounding probability were notable, with 16.4 per cent and 25.9 per cent of teachers incorrectly asserting that the probability of an event cannot be a fraction or a decimal or erroneously stating that it cannot be 0 or 1.

"This study serves as a wake-up call for our education system, which has long prioritized rote learning, leading to deep-rooted academic misconceptions passed down through generations of learners.

India's low ranking of 72 out of 73 countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessment underscores the prevalence of rote memorisation in classrooms and widening gap in conceptual understanding caused by familiar textbook-style questions," said Sridhar Rajagopalan, Co-founder and Chief Learning Officer (CLO).

"The skills students acquire are heavily influenced by the types of questions they encounter, with rote learning undermining critical and creative thinking.

While the NEP 2020 represents a positive policy step, schools and teachers must now take responsibility for upskilling and breaking this cycle.

The evolving demands of the modern world necessitate an education that fosters critical thinking and innovation, requiring educators to lead by example with the necessary skills," he added. —*PTI*

> **A staggering 80 per cent faltered on concepts such as ratio, proportional reasoning, algebraic reasoning, estimation, and logical reasoning - skills crucial for real-life problem-solving.** -Report

PHOTO: ANESSOFT.COM

'Panama Papers' trial: Court acquits all 28 defendants

NEW YORK, 29 JUNE

A Panamanian court has acquitted all 28 people charged with money laundering in connection with the Panama Papers scandal, concluding a trial that began in April. The secret financial documents were leaked in 2016, revealing how some of the world's richest and most powerful people use tax havens to hide their wealth. Among those exonerated were Jurgen Mossack and the late Ramon Fonseca, founder of Mossack Fonseca, the defunct law firm at the centre of the scandal. Judge Baloisa Marquinez said the evidence considered by the court was "not sufficient" to determine the criminal responsibility of the defendants. During the trial, the prosecution sought the maximum sentence of 12 years for money laundering for both Mossack and Fonseca, who died in hospital in May. Both Mossack and Fonseca denied they, their firm or their employees had acted illegally. *—BBC NEWS*

Pro-Palestinian protest: Singapore charges 3 activists

SINGAPORE, 29 JUNE

Three activists in Singapore have been charged over rallying people to deliver letters to the prime minister urging him to end ties with Israel. Singapore strictly regulates protests, and public demonstrations advocating causes of other countries are not allowed. Authorities have urged Singaporeans not to stage protests on the issue and instead participate in dialogues and donation drives. But there has been deep concern about the war and some Singaporeans, particularly younger ones, have been vocal in expressing their views online and desiring to make themselves heard. In February, the activists led about 70 people on a metres-long walk from a popular mall on Singapore's main shopping street Orchard Road to the presidential compound next door. *—BBC NEWS*

Pak seeks small arms from US for another operation

WASHINGTON/ ISLAMABAD, 29 JUNE

Pakistan's ambassador to the US Masood Khan has urged to provide small arms and modern equipment to his country to ensure the success of Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, Islamabad's newly approved counter-terrorism initiative. The decision to launch the 'Azm-e-Istehkam' operation was taken on 22 June at the apex committee meeting of the National Action Plan, a strategy approved in 2014 to eliminate militancy from the country. The federal government recently approved the reinvigorated national counter-terrorism drive. Pakistan has launched Azm-i-Istehkam to oppose and dismantle terrorist networks. *—PTI*

Bar agencies from contacting any judge: Pak Court

ISLAMABAD, 29 JUNE

Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to issue instructions to all civil and military agencies, including the Pakisttan's Intelligence Bureau and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), against contacting or approaching "any judge" or member of their staff, Dawn reported on Saturday Justice Shahid Karim issued the directions on a complaint filed by an anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge in Sargodha against harassment after he allegedly refused to meet officials of an intelligence agency, the Pakistan daily reported, citing a High Court order. Karim said, "Instructions shall go out by the Prime Minister's Office to all civil or military agencies, including the Intelligence Bureau." *—ANI*

Trump gloats over Biden's debate performance

'Those charged in 6th Jan riots have been unfairly prosecuted'

CHESAPEAKE, 29 JUNE

Former president Donald Trump gloated Friday over President Joe Biden's often halting performance at the first debate ahead of the November election, saying Democrats have no better choices while calling the Democratic incumbent "the most incompetent president" in US history.

Trump spoke to thousands of supporters Friday at a rally in Chesapeake, Virginia, a day after Biden's disappointing performance sparked concerns among his allies and other Democrats who were hoping for a more vigorous candidate to secure and improve his chances at reelection. Biden repeatedly stumbled, paused and could not complete sentences, prompting some people to wonder whether they could replace him ahead of November.

"The question every voter should be asking themselves today is not whether Joe Biden can survive a 90-minute debate performance, but whether America can survive four more years of crooked Joe Biden in the White House," Trump said.

Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks at the Road to Majority conference in Washington PHOTO: AP/PTI

- Biden repeatedly stumbled, paused and could not complete sentences, prompting some people to wonder whether they could replace him ahead of November

Trump repeated several of the false claims he made on Thursday, including about abortions later in pregnancy, and again referred to rioters who have been charged with storming the Capitol to try to overturn his 2020 loss as "hostages." He applauded a US Supreme Court ruling that came out earlier on Friday, limiting a federal obstruction law that has been used to charge Trump and hundreds of Capitol riot defendants. And he called for their release.

"Free the J6 hostages now. They should free them now for what they've gone through," he said, adding that the ruling "was a great thing for people that have been so horribly treated." Trump has long suggested the people charged in the riot have been unfairly prosecuted and continues to promote lies and unproven theories about voter fraud.

Virginia Gov Glenn Youngkin appeared alongside Trump on Friday, saying he was going to work to secure a Trump victory in a state Biden won in 2020. The Republican governor, who was once a favorite potential presidential candidate for anti-Trump Republicans, notably waited during this year's primary and only endorsed Trump in March. Trump said he did not think Biden could drop out of the race, mentioning the demands from some Democrats and opinion writers calling for Biden to step aside. He then criticized other high-profile Democrats such as California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Vice President Kamala Harris and former first lady Michelle Obama. Trump said he would be very happy going against Harris, who is Biden's running mate. *—AP*

Masoud Pezeshkian and Saeed Jalili PHOTO: X/@NYPOST

Iran Polls: Runoff between reformist and hard-liner

DUBAI, 29 JUNE

Iran will hold a runoff presidential election to replace the late hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi, an official said Saturday, after an initial vote saw the top candidates not securing an outright win.

The election this coming Friday will pit reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian against the hard-line former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili.

Mohsen Eslami, an election spokesman, announced the result in a news conference carried by Iranian state television. He said of 24.5 million votes cast, Pezeshkian got 10.4 million while Jalili received 9.4 million. Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf got 3.3 million. Shiite cleric Mostafa Pourmohammadi had over 2,06,000 votes.

Iranian law requires that a winner gets more than 50% of all votes cast. If not, the race's top two candidates will advance to a runoff a week later. There's been only one runoff presidential election in Iran's history: in 2005, when hard-liner Mahmoud Ahmadinejad bested former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Eslami acknowledged the country's Guardian Council would need to offer formal approval, but the result did not draw any immediate challenge from contenders in the race.

As has been the case since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women and those calling for radical change have been barred from running, while the vote itself will have no oversight from internationally recognized monitors.

Raisi, 63, died in the May 19 helicopter crash that also killed the country's foreign minister and others. He was seen as a protégé of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and a potential successor.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Republic continues to enrich uranium at near weapons-grade levels and maintains a stockpile large enough to build — should it choose to do so — several nuclear weapons. *—AP*

NO MORE NEGOTIATIONS

Working on 'comprehensive plan' to end war: Zelenskyy

KYIV, 29 JUNE

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that he is drawing up a "comprehensive plan", that will be supported by the majority of the world, to end the war with Russia, reported Al Jazeera.

"It is very important for us to show a plan to end the war that will be supported by the majority of the world," the Ukrainian president, along with Slovenian President Natasa Pirc Musar, said at a news conference in Kyiv on Friday. "This is the diplomatic route we are working on," he added.

Zelenskyy further said that there are no current negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. There are no current negotiations between Ukraine and Russia and, based on public statements by Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the two sides appear as far apart as ever when it comes to the terms of a potential peace settlement, reported Al Jazeera.

Ukraine has repeatedly said Russia must pull its troops out of its internationally recognised territory, including the peninsula of Crimea that Moscow annexed in 2014, before peace talks can start. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin, who launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, is demanding Ukraine effectively capitulate by evacuating even more territory across its east and south that Russia now occupies.

Earlier this month, the Ukrainian President hosted a major international summit in Switzerland, where Russia was not invited, to rally support for Ukraine's position. Over 90 countries sent leaders and senior officials to the two-day summit in Switzerland and a vast majority agreed to a final communique that stressed the need for Ukraine's "territorial integrity" to be respected in any settlement, Al Jazeera reported. *—ANI*

Ukraine President Zelenskyy said that there are no current negotiations between Ukraine and Russia PHOTO: X/@ZELENSKYYUA

US, Japan, S Korea conduct military drill

GIMHAE AIR BASE, 29 JUNE

The United States wrapped up its first multidomain exercise with Japan and South Korea in the East China Sea on Saturday, a step forward in Washington's efforts to strengthen and lock in its security partnerships with key Asian allies in the face of growing threats from North Korea and China.

The three-day Freedom Edge increased the sophistication of previous exercises with simultaneous air and naval drills geared toward improving joint ballistic-missile defense, anti-submarine warfare, surveillance and other skills and capabilities.

- The exercise is expected to expand in years to come, was also intended to improve the countries' abilities to share missile warnings

The exercise, which is expected to expand in years to come, was also intended to improve the countries' abilities to share missile warnings — increasingly important as North Korea tests ever-more sophisticated systems.

Outside of Australia, Japan and South Korea are the only US partners in the region with militaries sophisticated enough to integrate operations with the US so that if, for example, South Korea were to detect a target, it could quickly relay details so Japanese or American counterparts could respond, said Ridzwan Rahmat, a Singapore-based analyst with the defense intelligence company Janes.

Such exercises also carry the risk of increasing tensions, with China regularly denouncing drills in what it considers its sphere of influence, and North Korea already slamming the arrival of the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier group in the port of Busan. *—AP*

North Korea says it fired a new weapon

PYONGYANG, 29 JUNE

A weapons tested this week has become the latest point of contention between North and South Korea, with Pyongyang claiming that it had "successfully conducted the separation and guidance control test of individual mobile warheads" the day before. The weapon, it said, used the first-stage engine of an intermediate-range solid-fuel ballistic missile, and deployed three warheads plus a decoy. The missile travelled a "shortened range" of 170 to 200km to ensure safety and measure the flights of the warheads they fired an advanced multiple warhead missile and Seoul calling it a lie.

South Korea released a video it had filmed of the test, saying that the initial stage showed an unstable flight that led to a mid-air explosion. Military officials said they detected a large amount of debris, more than what should result from a successful test.

If North Korea's latest claims are true, it would represent significant progress in their missile programme. Currently only the US - which first developed it in the 1960s - as well as the UK, France, Russia and China are known to have these capabilities. Pyongyang is now trumpeting that they are a step closer to achieving it as well. For some time now, experts have floated the possibility of North Korea eventually developing MIRV capabilities; the technology that involves attaching several warheads to a single missile that would separate after launch. *—BBC News*

French PM in final appeal to stop far-right victory

PARIS, 29 JUNE

France's lightning-quick election campaign is over, and despite last-ditch appeals not to back the far right, voters appear ready to hand the National Rally party a historic victory in parliamentary elections.

Prime Minister Gabriel Attal warned it would unleash "impulses of hate and aggression". But the party of Marine Le Pen and 28-year old Jordan Bardella, who could be the next prime minister, has if anything cemented its lead in the opinion polls.

National Rally has fended off a series of accusations of racism, involving party members as much as supporters. The big question now is whether it can win an absolute majority in two rounds over the next two Sundays. They have a significant chance, after European elections on 9 June turned most of the electoral map of France dark blue. That was the moment Emmanuel Macron took a decision to call a general election in just three weeks.

National Rally is gearing up for a big night on Sunday, with one opinion poll hours before the campaign ended showing support at 36.5 per cent. Its candidates are hoping to win dozens of seats in the National Assembly outright on the night, with more than 50% of the vote. But most seats will be decided in run-off votes on 7 July, between two, three or even four contenders.

So opinion polls do not tell the whole story, and a hastily arranged left-wing alliance, the New Popular Front, also has its eye on victory, only a few points behind RN with 29 per cent. *—BBC News*

Gabriel Attal PHOTO: X/@GABRIELATTAL

The prolonged outages forced residents of the Railway Colony and nearby areas out of their homes, sparking protests PHOTO: ALJAZEERA

Electricity crisis triggers protests in Pak's Karachi

KARACHI, 29 JUNE

Karachi city in Pakistan witnessed massive protests due to severe electricity crisis amid a soaring temperature, Pakistan's local daily, The Express Tribune reported on Saturday.

Between Friday and Monday night, areas including Shaheen Complex, Punjab Chowrangi, Liaquatabad, Nazimabad, Orangi Town, and Abu al-Hasan Isfahani Road endured frequent load-shedding. The prolonged outages forced residents of the Railway Colony and nearby areas out of their homes, sparking protests near Shaheen Complex.

Citizens took to the streets, burning tyres and blocking roads, exacerbating traffic woes, The Express Tribune reported. Demonstrators voiced outrage over the disruptive and unpredictable load shedding, which has severely disrupted daily life in the city.

The report further said that despite scores of complaints, residents continued to receive hefty electricity bills. Also, residents claimed that while they pay hefty electricity bills, even for single-room accommodations, penalties are imposed on entire communities for the non-payment of bills by a few individuals.

They criticised the disparity of officials enjoying free electricity while punishing residents for delayed payments. The community warned of further demonstrations if the Sindh government and governor do not swiftly resolve the ongoing power crisis.

Locals demanded an immediate end to the irregular power cuts affecting the Railway Colony and surrounding regions. In Punjab Chowrangi, protests escalated into major traffic jams, with heavy trucks lining the streets. The scorching heat combined with persistent outages has exacerbated living conditions across Liaquatabad, Nazimabad, and Orangi Town. *—ANI*

DON'T WORRY: NASA

Sunita Williams, Wilmore stuck in space

WASHINGTON DC, 29 JUNE

Projected to last only days, the first crewed test flight of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft with two astronauts onboard is in limbo with no exact return to Earth announced.

NASA's Commercial Crew Programme manager, Steve Stich has said that the US space agency is considering extending the duration of Starliner's mission from 45 days to 90 days, CNN reported.

Officials have repeatedly hinted that the Starliner, which faced issues with helium leaks and thruster outages heading to the International Space Station in early June, will be safe to bring astronauts including indian-origin Sunita 'Suni' Williams and Butch Wilmore home. Nappi said that part of the aim is conducting the ground tests while the vehicle is still in space are to try to whittle down possible reasons why the thrusters malfunctioned.

NASA said that the duration of Starliner's mission can be extended from 45 days to 90 days, CNN reported PHOTO: X/@SPACE_STATION

He added, "If it comes back and says, 'Here's 80 per cent of the answer. And if you just run one more docked hot fire (test on the Starliner in orbit), then you can get 100 per cent of the answers' -- then we want (Starliner) to be there so that we can get that information."

As per the design, the service module will not survive the return to Earth. It is not clear yet whether NASA will extend the maximum mission length to 90 days. Stich said officials must clear the battery life of the Starliner for that purpose. Although he noted that the batteries are being recharged at the space station, they should operate the same way after 90 days as they will for the first 45 days. *—ANI*

- Officials have repeatedly hinted that the Starliner, which faced issues with helium leaks and thruster outages heading to the International Space Station in early June, will be safe

IBM, Gujarat ink pact to establish AI cluster at GIFT City

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

IBM and the Gujarat government on Saturday inked a pact to establish and promote an AI cluster leveraging IBM's 'watsonx' to drive innovation and collaboration among financial institutions in Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City. Under this partnership, financial institutions will gain access to AI Sandbox, assistance in providing proof of concept, AI literacy programmes and digital assistant solutions, according to a release. IBM's 'watsonx' is an AI for business.Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said: "This MoU with IBM will help Gujarat to lead the country in efforts to adopt AI and drive digital transformation."*—PTI*

PHOTO: NIKE

Nike expects 10% drop in revenue amid competition

OREGON, 29 JUNE

Nike has said it expects a surprise 10 per cent drop in quarterly revenue, as it faces growing competition from newer rivals such as On and Hoka. The news sent Nike shares plunging more than 12 per cent in after hours trading, which could mean a loss of USD 15 billion in market value if the losses hold on Friday. The world's largest sportswear company also told investors it is facing weakening demand in international markets, including in China. But Nike is optimistic that new products and a marketing campaign at the upcoming Olympic Games in Paris will help the company regain momentum with consumers. "The Paris Olympics offers us a pinnacle moment to communicate our vision of sport to the world," CEO John Donahoe said on the earnings call. *—BBC News*

X usage touched all-time high during US prez debate

WASHINGTON DC, 29 JUNE

Elon Musk on Saturday said that his social media platform X witnessed record usage during the recent televised debate between US President Joe Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for the upcoming presidential elections later this year. Musk, who is also the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, took to his account on X to detail that the microblogging platform which was formerly known as Twitter touched 76 Billion User-Seconds in the United States. "X US usage reaches all-time high! 76B total user-seconds in the US, beating the previous record by 5%," posted Musk. The posts were retweeted by Musk from his personal profile. This marks a pivotal moment for X, reflecting its growing influence. *—ANI*

HubSpot probes users'account hack claims

WASHINGTON,DC, 29 JUNE

Marketing and sales software giant HubSpot said on Friday that it's investigating a cybersecurity incident. On Friday, rumors of some kind of cyberattack against HubSpot began circulating on social media. When reached by TechCrunch on Friday, HubSpot's chief information security officer Alyssa Robinson said in a statement that the company "identified a security incident that involved bad actors targeting a limited number of HubSpot customers and attempting to gain unauthorized access to their accounts." "HubSpot triggered our incident response procedures, and since 22 June we have been contacting impacted customers and taking necessary steps to revoke the unauthorized access and protect our customers and their data," said Robinson. *Courtesy, —TechCrunch*

World Bank approves green financing of $1.5B

It aims to promote development of low-carbon energy

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

World Bank on Saturday, approved USD 1.5 billion in financing to accelerate India's development of low-carbon energy.

"The financing will help India promote low-carbon energy by scaling up renewable energy, developing green hydrogen, and stimulating climate finance for low-carbon energy investments.," the World Bank said in a blog post.

Apart from this second phase of financing stimulus, last year in June 2023, the World Bank approved the USD 1.5 billion First Low-Carbon Energy Programmatic Development Policy Operation, which supported the waiver of transmission charges for renewable energy in green hydrogen projects.

With this financing, efforts will be made to enhance the market capability for green hydrogen. The emphasis will also be given to scaling up renewable energy and stimulating finance for low-carbon energy investments, as per the statement.

India will require an expansion of green hydrogen production PHOTO: PIXABAY

The second Low-Carbon Energy Programmatic Development Policy Operation will support reforms to boost the production of green hydrogen and electrolyzers, critical technology needed for green hydrogen production. The operation also supports reforms to boost renewable energy penetration, for instance, by incentivizing battery energy storage solutions and amending the Indian Electricity Grid Code to improve renewable energy integration into the grid.

Recognising the need to separate India's economic growth from emission growth, the World Finance Organisation pointed out that decoupling economic growth from emissions growth will require scaling up renewable energy, especially in hard-to-abate industrial sectors.

It added that India will require an expansion of green hydrogen production and consumption as well as a faster development of climate finance to boost the mobilisation of finance for low-carbon investments. The reforms supported by the operation are expected to result in the production of at least 450,000 metric tons of green hydrogen and 1,500 MW of electrolyzers per year from the financial year 2025-26 onwards.

In addition, it will also help to increase renewable energy capacity and support reductions in emissions by 50 million tons per year. *—ANI*

India, Aus bagged 80% of Asia-Pacific's renewable deals

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

India, along with Australia, accounted for 80 per cent of the 5.4 GW of corporate renewable contracts announced in the Asia-Pacific region in the first quarter of 2024, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights (GCI).

As the global push for renewable energy continues to gain momentum, India is emerging as a key player in corporate clean energy procurement, significantly contributing to the global surge in renewable energy adoption.

This reflects a 31 per cent year-on-year growth in the region. India's contribution is particularly noteworthy given the country's commitment to scaling up renewable energy capacity to meet its ambitious climate goals and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Indian corporations have been increasingly proactive in adopting renewable energy solutions, not just as a response to regulatory pressures but also as a strategic move to enhance sustainability and reduce operational costs.

15.8 GW of corporate renewable capacity was contracted globally in first quarter of 2024 PHOTO: PIXABAY

The nation's corporate sector, including giants in technology, manufacturing, and services, has shown a keen interest in clean energy procurement.

The global trend in corporate procurement of renewable energy has shown remarkable growth in 2024, building on a substantial increase from previous years.

In the first quarter of 2024 alone, 15.8 GW of corporate renewable capacity was contracted globally, reflecting a 36 per cent year-on-year increase.

Europe led in terms of capacity, while the Asia-Pacific region, notably India and Australia, dominated in the number of deals, underlining the significant role of corporate entities in driving the renewable energy agenda.

Globally, solar photovoltaic (PV) technology remains the preferred choice for corporate contracting, accounting for 50 per cent of the deals in the first quarter of 2024. ~ *—ANI*

TRAI modifies new SIM replacement rules from 1 July

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Amendments to Mobile Number Portability (MNP) regulations to check SIM swap and replacement fraudulent activities will come into force from 1 July, The telecom regulatory body Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said on Friday.

As per the TRAI rules, users can also choose the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) facility which allows them to retain their mobile number when they move from one access provider to another access provider in the country.

TRAI has also decided to introduce an additional criterion for rejection of the request for allocation of the Unique Porting Code through these amendment regulations.

It further mandates that the UPC should not be allocated if the request for UPC has been made before the expiry of seven days from the date of SIM swap or replacement of the mobile number which was earlier ten days.

—ANI

AFTER AIRTEL

Vodafone Idea to hike mobile tariff by 10-24% from 4 July

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea will roll out revised mobile service tariffs increasing rates in the range of 10-24 per cent from 4 July.

Bharti Airtel announced a 10-21 per cent hike in prepaid and postpaid mobile tariffs from 3 July, a day after larger rival Reliance Jio announced an increase in rates.

Later in the day, loss-making telecom operator Vodafone Idea (Vi) also announced its plan to raise mobile tariffs by 11-24 per cent from 4 July.

Vi, however, has not made any changes across its several plans comprising Rs 1,799 and Rs 3,099 plan with 365 days validity as well as some of the data add-on packs.

Jio, India's largest telecom operator, announced a 12-27 per cent hike in mobile tariffs on Thursday.

That said, a look at the tariff and rate hikes announced by the two telcos respectively, indicates that most of the Airtel mobile plans will still cost more than that of Reliance Jio. Among the unlimited voice plans, Airtel has raised tariffs in the ballpark range of about 11 per cent, and accordingly rates are revised from Rs 179 to Rs 199; from Rs 455 to Rs 509; and from Rs 1,799 to Rs 1,999. "In line with its commitment to provide its consumers with simple and comprehensive plans, Vi has curated an optimum range of feature-rich plans to meet the diverse needs of its consumers. Staying true to its philosophy of supporting entry-level users and progressively linking higher prices to increased usage, changes in entry-level plans are nominal," Vi said. *—PTI*

NEW PRICES FOR VI

- 28 days recharge cost raised to Rs 199 from Rs 179.
- Price of 84-day plan with 1.5GB data now Rs 859 (up from Rs 719).
- Price of annual unlimited plan raised to Rs 3,499 from 2,899.
- No change to 365-day plan with 24GB data for Rs 1,799.
- No change to annual plan with 2GB date per day for Rs 3,099.

Vi has not made any changes across its several plans PHOTO: X@KAPANY

Perplexity AI under scrutiny over claims of scrapping online content

SEATTLE, 29 JUNE

- Amazon was assessing information it received from the news outlet WIRED, which published an investigation earlier this month

Amazon is reviewing claims that the artificial intelligence startup Perplexity AI is scraping content — including from prominent news sites — without approval.

Amazon Spokesperson Samantha Mayowa confirmed Friday that the tech giant was assessing information it received from the news outlet WIRED, which published an investigation earlier this month that said Perplexity appeared to scrape content from websites that had prohibited access from such practices. Perplexity uses servers by Amazon Web Services, otherwise known as AWS.

Amazon's "terms of service prohibit abusive and illegal activities and our customers are responsible for complying with those terms," Mayowa said in a prepared statement. "We routinely receive reports of alleged abuse from a variety of sources and engage our customers to understand those reports."

Perplexity spokesperson Sara Platnick said Friday that the company had determined that Perplexity-controlled services are not crawling websites in any way that violates AWS terms of service.

—AP

UNDER CENTRAL SCHEMES

'Private banks should give more benefits'

BILASPUR, 29 JUNE

Private sector banks in the district should give more benefits to people under various government schemes, especially pension schemes, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bilaspur Nidhi Patel said.

During a meeting with bankers' committee on Friday, she said as compared to government banks, private banks are opening very few accounts under social security pension schemes of the central government, which was shocking and asked why private lenders were lagging in this field.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana are some of the important schemes of the central government.

S0.20.he directed officials of ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and HDFC Bank to

[e opening of maximum number of accounts under the major social security pension schemes of the Centre, before the next quarterly meeting.

She said that the credit deposit (CD) ratio of private banks increased from 25.49 per cent to 26.92 per cent in the last quarter.

Still at a low level, this CD ratio means that private banks are giving less loans to people and due to this, the pace of development in the district suffers. Patel instructed the officials concerned to increase their CD ratio and give maximum loans to people.

The ADC also instructed the officials to provide maximum loans in the agricultural sector and expressed concern over less loans given by SBI in the sector. *—PTI*

CRISIS TIME

'Missing Data' a problem for Indian firms

BOSTON / MUMBAI 29 JUNE

Despite their efforts to achieve operational efficiency and growth, many Indian organizations, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), are currently grappling with a significant challenge of the missing data, says a Report published by Looqup Data, a United States and India – based Enterprise Workflow GenAI startup.

The Report titled 'The Missing Data Conundrum in Indian Enterprises' released by Looqup Data analyzed the data and workflow needs of Indian organizations from the sectors such as healthcare, logistics, retail, manufacturing, etc to map out the areas of deficiencies in data availability and its impact on organizational growth. The Report observed that about 80 per cent of the organizations it studied from various sectors did not have access to the right data at the right time for decision-making impending the growth of the organizations.

Report recommended that the organisations should consider implementing automation PHOTO: PIXABAY

The Report further observed that out of 150 small and medium organizations from different sectors in India studied for certain data needs, about 70 per cent of the organizations lacked the ability to swiftly generate, convert, and interpret data into effective decisions that disrupted their workflows resulting into loss of productivity. It was noted that the Logistics and Retail industries were impacted the most by the missing data issues and struggled to prioritize their data management needs, invest in the right tools and technologies.

Citing this scenario as a matter of concern, Arun Ghosh, Co-founder, Looqup Data said, "In this study, we have identified a stark reality that Indian businesses, particularly the SMEs, are engulfed with the missing data conundrum. While their data needs are many and the volume of data they generate is high, they do lack right channels to access and process the data for real-time decision-making creating workflow hazards and impacting efficiency. An urgent action is required to address this issue and unlock the potential for organizational growth."

The Report recommended that the organizations should consider implementing automation and leverage capabilities of artificial intelligence – led solutions. *—PTI*

Fidelity sells HCL Tech shares for ₹1,788 crore

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Fidelity Investments on Friday sold shares of HCL Technologies for Rs 1,788 crore through open market transactions.

US-based Fidelity Investments, through its eight affiliates, sold shares of IT firm HCL Technologies through separate block deals on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). As per the data available with the NSE, Fidelity Investment sold a total of 1,24,14,228 shares or 0.46 per cent stake in HCL Technologies.

The shares were offloaded at an average price of Rs 1,440.50, taking the deal size to Rs 1,788.27 crore.

ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund (MF), Kotak Mahindra MF, SBI MF, Societe Generale, Morgan Stanley, Blackstone, Citigroup Global Markets Mauritius, Copthall Mauritius Investment, Ghisallo Master Fund LP, and Goldman Sachs were among the buyers of HCL Technologies' shares.

On Friday, shares of HCL Technologies rose 0.42 per cent to settle at Rs 1,461 per piece on the NSE.

Haridas Thakarshi Kanani, one of the promoters of Neogen Chemicals, pared a 5.6 per cent stake in the company for Rs 241 crore. The shares were disposed of at an average price of Rs 1,611.14 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs 240.86 crore.

After the share sale, the combined shareholding of the promoter and promoter group entities has declined to 51.23 per cent from 56.89 per cent. *—PTI*

India posts record-breaking total, SA fights back

As track keeps deteriorating there is more turn: Rana

CHENNAI, 29 JUNE

India posted the biggest ever total in the history of women's Test cricket by scoring a mammoth 603 for six declared before South Africa Women fought valiantly through Sune Luus and Marizanne Kapp on day two of the one-off Test, here Saturday.

Senior India spinner Sneh Rana depended on channel bowling to get three wickets on the second day of the one-off Test against South Africa but also benefitted from the variable bounce due to considerable deterioration of the Chepauk track.

The hosts resumed the day at the overnight score of 525 for four with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Richa Ghosh beginning the proceedings.

Playing her fifth Test, the India skipper raised her maiden half-century in the long format, scoring 69 of 115 balls while Richa (86) also got her career-best knock of 86 to extend India's domination.

They added 143 runs for the fifth wicket.

At 576, the Indians broke the record of the highest team total in Women's Test cricket, bettering the previous record held by Australia, who had posted 575 for nine declared against South Africa in Perth this February.

However, at 593, the stand was broken after Harmanpreet was trapped leg-before by Tumi Sekhukhune.

Just 10 runs later, Richa departed too after being trapped leg-before by Nonkululeko Mlaba, and the Indian captain declared the innings. South Africa put up a spirited fight with top-order batter Sune Luus (65) and Marizanne (69 not out) as they finished the day at 236 for four, trailing by 367 runs.

Delmi Tucker remained the most successful South African bowler with figures of two for 141, while Masabata Klaas was the most economical of all.

—PTI

South Africa Women's Sune Luus and Marizanne Kapp run between the wickets on the second day of a one-off test cricket match between India Women and South Africa Women **PHOTO: PTI**

AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX

F1 leader Verstappen takes pole position

SPIELBERG, 29 JUNE

Max Verstappen followed up his victory in the sprint race with another dominant performance in qualifying for Formula 1's Austrian Grand Prix on Saturday to take pole position for the fourth straight year at the Red Bull Ring.

Verstappen clocked 1 minute, 4.314 seconds with his final attempt in the third qualifying session to beat McLaren's Lando Norris by 0.404 seconds and take his eighth pole of the season. Norris' teammate Oscar Piastri was initially 0.472 seconds back in third but had his time deleted for narrowly going outside track limits, pushing him down to seventh place and lifting George Russell of Mercedes into third.

Carlos Sainz Jr. of Ferrari and Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes rounded out the top five. Formula 1 leader Max Verstappen held off an early attack by Lando Norris before pulling away from the two McLarens to comfortably secure his third sprint race victory of the year Saturday at the Austrian Grand Prix.

Verstappen finished 4.616 seconds ahead of McLaren's Oscar Piastri to make it three wins out of three in sprint races this season, with Norris another 0.732 seconds back in third. The dominant Verstappen has also won seven of the 10 grand prix races this season as he aims for a seemingly inevitable fourth straight F1 title. *—AP*

Max Verstappen **PHOTO:@MAXVERSTAPPEN1**

PHOTO: PTI

Pragg let Gukesh off the hook on a day of draws

BUCHAREST, 29 JUNE

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa missed out on becoming a joint leader at the Superbet Classic chess tournament after settling for a draw against compatriot D Gukesh in the third round here. After losing to Gukesh in the last Candidates tournament in April earlier this year, Praggnanandhaa had a great opportunity to equalize the score this year but could not find a winning continuation after Gukesh spoiled a drawn endgame. The Catalan opening saw Gukesh sacrificing a pawn early and Praggnanandhaa had his share of counterplay on the Queen's side. As things unfolded, Gukesh recovered the pawn with an optical advantage with his Knight against a slightly bad Bishop of Praggnanandhaa.*—AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Badminton: Bansod shocks Kristy Gilmour in US

PARIS, 29 JUNE

India's Malvika Bansod stunned Scotland's Kristy Gilmour in a thrilling three-game match to advance to the women's singles semifinals of the US Open Super 300 badminton tournament here. The 22-year-old from Nagpur, ranked 49th, registered a 10-21 21-15 21-10 win over Kristy, a 2014 Commonwealth Games silver medallist. Malvika had defeated Kristy at the Hylo Open in 2022 when the Scot shuttler had retired in the second game due to an injury. The Indian had lost twice to Kristy in the past.*—AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Novak Djokovic 'pain-free' ahead of Wimbledon

DUBAI, 29 JUNE

Novak Djokovic proclaimed himself "pain-free" after defeating Daniil Medvedev in an exhibition match on Friday ahead of Wimbledon.Former world number one Djokovic, the seven-time Wimbledon champion, needed surgery earlier this month following a serious knee injury at the French Open. But on Friday, the 37-year-old took his place in the draw for Wimbledon.*—AP*

EURO 2024

Julian Nagelsmann defends striker Havertz

DORTMUND, 29 JUNE

Germany will be playing Denmark in their Round of 16 match at the Signal Iduna Park as the side will be hoping to reach the quarterfinals of a major tournament for the first time since the Euro 2016 when they were defeated by hosts France.

Much criticism has been revolving around striker Kai Havertz and his inclusion in the side as many are calling for the Arsenal forward to be replaced by Niclas Fullkrug, who has been a positive reinforcement from the bench.

Ahead of the highly anticipated game, German manager Julian Nagelsmann has shut down all talk regarding the striker's position, stating 'Kai is an important player' in the team.

"He has a clear job in a lot of games, which goes hand in hand with the fact that he doesn't have many ball actions because he should create space for others. Internally, Kai is ranked significantly higher than in the public," said Nagelsmann to Sky Sports Germany.

Havertz scored and provided an assist in Germany's opening encounter against Scotland. Since then he has been unable to find the net in the remaining two Group Stage games. Niclas Fullkrug on the other hand was substituted onto the pitch against Switzerland and managed to score a late equaliser, sparking debate. *—AP*

Julian Nagelsmann and striker Havertz **PHOTO: @KAIHAVERTZ29**

Croatia fined $112,000 by UEFA for fan misconduct

FRANKFURT, 29 JUNE

Croatia was fined 105,000 euros ($112,500) by UEFA for fan misconduct at a European Championship elimination game against Italy, the federation said on Friday. The financial penalty is the biggest UEFA announced at the tournament, and the second for Croatia. A separate investigation by UEFA is ongoing into alleged racism involving both sets of fans at Croatia's second Euro 2024 game, against Albania. The separate fines for incidents at the Croatia-Italy game on Monday were 45,000 euros for throwing objects, including beer cups, 30,000 euros for lighting flares and fireworks, and 30,000 euros for "inappropriate behavior" that was not specified.

Kohli, Axar take India to 176/7

BRIDGETOWN, 29 JUNE

Virat Kohli was guarded in his approach while Axar Patel was the enforcer as India recovered from early jitters to post 176 for 7 against South Africa in the T20 World Cup final here on Saturday.

At 34 for three, India was staring at another batting failure in a big final before Axar (47 off 31) and Kohli (76 off 59) turned the tide for them.Axar was run out in an unfortunate manner, completely against the run of play, which brought about an end to his 72-run partnership off 54 balls with Kohli. Kohli did slow down considerably in the middle overs to bring up his first 50 off the tournament with 48 balls.Rohit Sharma (9) had no hesitation in batting first at Kensington Oval where the pitch has not been the easiest to bat on through the competition.

The Indian captain, coming from two back-to-back match-winning efforts, departed early after collecting a couple of consecutive fours off Keshav Maharaj in the second over of the game.Maharaj responded well by having Rohit caught at square leg as the batter went for a sweep. Rohit and incoming batter Rishabh Pant both fell to the sweep shot.The tension in the Indian camp increased when Suryakumar Yadav, who has also been in good touch like Rohit, was caught at fine-leg after not getting enough from his pick-up shot off Rabada, leaving India with three down inside the powerplay.

At 45 for three in six overs, it was the slowest powerplay for India in the Caribbean leg. Watching wickets tumble at the other end, Kohli, who hit three elegant boundaries off Marco Jansen in the opening over of the final, shifted gears during the middle overs and let Axar come up with an odd boundary.Such was the nature of Kohli's knock that his first big hit after the powerplay, a straight six off Rabada, came in the 18th overAxar, on the other hand, potentially played the innings of his T20 career and negotiated the South African spinners effectively, collecting a six each from Aiden Markram, Maharaj, and Tabraiz Shamsi. *—PTI*

Axar and Virat Kohli **PHOTO: PTI**

Sabalenka 'not 100%' certain for Wimbledon

DUBAI, 29 JUNE

Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka said Saturday she is "not 100%" certain of playing her first-round Wimbledon match due to a "really rare" shoulder injury. Sabalenka, a two-time semi-finalist at the All England Club, had to quit her quarter-final match against Anna Kalinskaya in Berlin last week due to a problem. "I'm not 100% fit now," admitted the 26-year-old Belarusian, who is due to face 106th-ranked Emina Bektas of the United States of America in the first round on Monday.

"We're doing everything we can with my team to make sure I'll be able to play my first match here. But, no, I'm not 100% ready."

When asked if there was a chance she may withdraw on Monday, she said: "There is always a chance, yeah."

Sabalenka said her doctors had told her that she was "just the second or the third tennis player who injured the (shoulder) muscle".

"It's a specific injury, and it's a rare one." *—AP*

Athlete Lili Das, who won a gold medal in the 1500m event at the National Inter-State Athletics Championships in Panchkula **PHOTO: PTI**

Golf: Sharma shines in the Italy

PARIS, 29 JUNE

Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma fired identical 68s in his first two rounds to be tied for seventh in the Italian Open on the DP World Tour here.

The Indian star, who is headed to the Olympic Games in August, had five birdies against two bogeys in the second round.

In the first round, he had three birdies and an eagle against two bogeys.

Sharma has had a modest season with a best of T-7 in the Singapore Classic as his best and was T-16 at the Hero Dubai Desert Classic, one of the marquee events on the Tour.

Shubhankar Sharma and Aditi Ashok **PHOTO: PTI**

Aditi misses cut at Dow Championship golf

India's Aditi Ashok and her Thai partner, Pajaree Anannarukarn missed the cut despite a good second round of 4-under 66 in the Dow Championship golf championship on the LPGA Tour here.

The Indo-Thai combination, which had finished in the Top 10 of this event before, shot 72 and 66 to be 2-under for T-59 position but missed the cut, which fell at 7-under.

Plenty of action was in the second round of the Dow Championship as five teams zoomed to the top of the leaderboard. *—AP*

COPA AMERICA 2024

Brazil coach hails Vini after win over Paraguay

LAS VEGAS, 29 JUNE

Brazil came swinging out the floodgates in their 4-1 win over Paraguay at the Allegiant Stadium. It seemed like a completely different Brazilian side came out to play than the one that failed to break down Costa Rica's defense in their opening game.

Much criticism was directed towards Vinicius after the Costa Rica game as the Real Madrid forward failed to make an impact in the game. The 23-year-old proved many haters wrong as he played 'An almost perfect match.'"Today he played a very important role.

He played an almost perfect match, he created very good situations and opportunities. He was dynamic, very effective straightforward, and direct. He played well with other players and teamed up nicely, he has great capacity," said Head Coach Dorival to reporters post-game.

Vinicius opened the scoring in the 35th minute before doubling his tally and scoring the third goal of the game five minutes into the stoppage time in the first half. He could have also scored his third but gave Lucas Paqueta the chance to open his scoring tally of the tournament with a penalty.

The Brazilian forward frustratedly had spoken to reporters following the game against Costa Rica where he had spoken on the reason behind his struggles with the national team and how he knew where he needed to improve and he

Brazil's Vinicius Junior celebrates scoring his side's opening goal against Paraguay during a Copa America Group D soccer match in Las Vegas **PHOTO: X / @COPAAMERICA**

Olympics: Sha'Carri and Grant keep blazing

EUGENE, 29 JUNE

Grant Holloway won U.S. track trials in the 110-meter hurdles, finishing in 12.86 seconds, the fourth-fastest time in history, to earn a chance to capture the Olympic title that eluded him in an upset loss three years ago.

The 26-year-old three-time world champion will head to the Olympics as the favorite even after clipping the eighth hurdle and having to lean into the finish to beat Freddie Crittenden by .07. This marked Holloway's third sub-13 run of the season — the second-fastest of his career. Daniel Roberts finished third in 12.96, making this the first race in history with three sub-13 times.

Others with unfinished business looming at the Olympics include Sha'Carri Richardson and Noah Lyles, each of whom blazed through their 200-meter semifinals to set up races Saturday to qualify for their second event.

Richardson faces a matchup against Gabby Thomas in what could be one of the best races of the trials.

Holloway's 110 hurdles was impressive, though he's well aware that making the games and bringing home Olympic gold are two different things.

In Tokyo three years ago, he cleared all 10 hurdles but faded late and lost by .05 to Jamaica's Hansle Parchment, who runs in his country's national championship this weekend. *—AP*

Grant Holloway and Sha'Carri

PHOTO: X / @ITSSHACARRI